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Life Tints



Clara Viola Flebarty















# A Study in Life Tints

BY

CLARA VIOLA FLEHARTY

Author of "Life's Blue and Gray,"  
"A Wild Rose"

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Study nature, elevate yourselves to the laws that govern it, and make of it, as it were, a living truth: The more profoundly you understand its laws, the nearer you approach to God.

Study, above all, humanity: Humanity is greater than nature, and knows Him, while nature is ignorant of Him.

—*M. V. Cousins.*

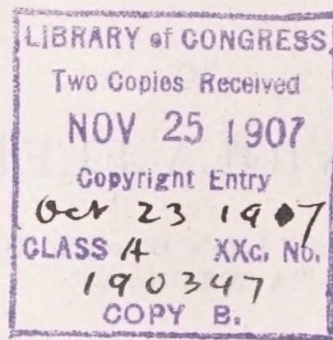
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1907



## Dedication

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To

Hon. M. S. Brace

My Grandfather

Whose sturdy manhood, whether as a private citizen or in the halls of the Legislature, commanded the esteem of all who knew him.

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To My Beloved Uncle

Hon. S. F. Fleharty

Who bore himself upon the battlefield as became a gallant officer.

Who, upon the larger battlefield of life, where moral questions were at issue, was ever a pronounced champion of the right.

Who, in the halls of Congress, and as a writer of marked ability, was distinguished for all that is noblest and best in manhood.

I acknowledge my debt of gratitude to these strong types of manhood, and reverently dedicate these pages to their memory.

Their grand daughter and niece,

Clara Viola Fleharty.



## THE CLOUDS OF GOD.

“The city is full of labor  
And struggle and strife and care;  
The fever pulse of the city  
Is throbbing in all the air;  
But calm through the sunlit spaces  
And calm through the starlit sky,  
Forever over the city,  
The clouds of God go by.

“The city is full of passion,  
And shame, and anger, and sin;  
Of hearts that are dark with evil,  
Of souls that are black within.  
But white as the robes of angels  
And pure as the wind swept sky,  
Forever over the city,  
The clouds of God go by.

“The city is full of sorrow  
And tears that are shed in vain;  
By day and night there rises  
The voice of its grief and pain;  
But soft as a benediction  
They bend from the vault on high,  
And over the sorrowful city  
The clouds of God go by.

“O eyes that are old with vigil!  
O eyes that are dim with tears!  
Look up from the path of sorrow  
That measures itself in years,  
And read in the blue above you  
The peace that ever is nigh,  
While over the troubled city  
The clouds of God go by.”



## PREFACE.

**I**N presenting this book to the public, the author does so through a strong conviction that life should be painted in its reality, and that the time is ripe for literature of the day to deal with facts more and fancy less. That did we expect life to be a mixture of disappointments and joys, we would be less liable to sink under the weight of the sudden blighting of our fairest dreams, and would take it as we find it, with a more philosophical view, greater faith that all is a part of life's discipline, with sure hope that sorrow will pass away, and with greater fortitude to endure; "for the darkest night is hedged about with daybreak roses." Thus Browning's courageous view point might be attained, for while facing life's stern realities he expressed himself in the following: "While I see day succeed the deepest night, how can I speak but as I know? My speech shall be throughout the darkness; *it will end, the light that did burn, will burn.*"

It is not a fine spun theory to say that life is a grand oratorio. We all play some part whether cognizant of it or not.

Shall it be a discordant one and mar the music of the whole?

This, the question that each human soul must determine.

In the portrayal of some dark picture the author trusts the reader will never lose consciousness that



the undertone is one of hope, which shines through the whole scheme of human life, of faith in the Infinite Lover, who is ready to illuminate the darkness of all who are receptive, and of firm belief that this Power Divine will bring ultimate victory out of life's strange lessons if we but yield to its guidance.

But to those who have not caught the inner message, or are bowed under injustice and sorrow, it must seem a mockery to speak of life as a symphony, for at times to us all the strains unfold in sad perplexed minors, and we murmur: 'Where is any certain time or measured music in such notes as these? But angels leaning from their golden seat are not so minded, their fine ear hath caught the issue of completed cadences—and smiling down the stars they whisper—Sweet.'

But from our limited view point, life is often a troublesome mystery that we cannot solve, and it is difficult to discover any poetry, much less hear the song. Nerves have been stretched in tightest tension and our heart strings played upon by rude hands. Thus in the whirl and worry of life we seem rendered incapable of hearing anything but jar and discord. We cannot measure the weary lines and are too dull to catch the rhythm; but it is there, for God writes the words, and He is harmony.

In moments of despair the cloud of witnesses, including earth's grandest characters down all the ages, come to us with the assurance that in spite of the sin, want, and suffering, life is worth the living; and to the soul who struggles to overcome—at last



the poem that was being written out all along the years of our earth pilgrimage is set to music and belongs to the grand chant of the universe.

Perhaps 'tis only a low note, a humble part some of us fill, but shall that be wanting when the Master Musician listens to the rendition of the completed chorus?

We may also consider Life as a beautiful picture, of which some one gives us the exquisite thought: "A picture is a poem without words."

Every lovely scene is full of lights and shadows, the shadows being most essential in bringing out the beauty of the whole.

Thus we may come at length to the realization that the shadows which have touched us as we climb some rugged steep, the rocks that barred our way, the thorns that tore us as we passed, seen by light of closing day, form a picture at the last!

But neither song, poetry, nor picture, can we discover when caught in some hurricane of life.

Our craft is so frail, the waves as they mount heavenward will surely overwhelm us, and our hearts faint as we catch the roar of the breakers! Onward we are driven! Downward it seems. Would to God it were onward and upward!

We become breathless as the spray kisses our cheek. How can such a fragile bark ride these billows, outride the storm?

Courage my soul! Hearest thou that Voice of power, yet thrilling sweetness? "Peace, peace, be still!" and the turbulence of wind and wave is hushed.



'Tis thus the storms and passions of life are stilled and we are brought into our desired haven, not beyond the sunset, but here and now into the port where with clarified vision we can see the rainbow.

For Love has shone upon our teardrops and transformed them into wondrous tints that glorify our sky.

Alas! that we have lived so oft "in the middle of our aches," as to miss many of these bows of promise.

It is said of the rainbow, "It is like the calm wing of Deity unfurled, it bends from the cloud and encircles the world."

Thus it bends over each lonely life with its message of hope, and the story of the rainbow is God's beautiful pledge written upon earth's night, "to tell the tired world that rainbows shall not die."



# A STUDY IN LIFE TINTS.

## CHAPTER I.

Somber skies, colorless save for an occasional hint of dark blue, the atmosphere chill and damp, a day that made would-be pedestrians postpone their goings forth, if possible, a dark day in the city, when people plodded onward with deeper care lines engraved on faces that showed little of light and still less of hope, faces that attracted a humanity student, because of the stories so plainly traceable therein.

On this dull gray day, the slow rain was coming down with its monotonous drip, drip, as if it had forgotten the merry dash and sparkle of its power, and was silently shedding tears over the tragedy called Life.

Passing along the crowded thoroughfare, was a person who seemed ordinary enough in dress and general appearance. Nothing striking about the figure, if you do not catch a glimpse of the keen blue eyes, a plain face, with lines of care, although the step is springing, and you discover that not over thirty-five years have burdened him with their weight. Why, in a crowded street, should one be so strangely impressed with that face out of many more handsome?



By the law of intuition, of instantaneous flashing of the truth, you know that man not only has a history, but is making history. In other words, is living a life of real force and use in the world.

Some strength has come from that momentary passing, and your inspiration is a true one, as you murmur: "One of earth's uncrowned heroes."

Why that feeling? Whence that revelation?

May one safely follow their impressions?

If of a highly imaginative temperament, it may be illusion, but a sane well-balanced mind often receives as plants do the moisture, the true impressions, which Emerson terms the emphasis of the soul which is always right.

That great souls often recognize each other instantly, has long been an established axiom.

Non-receptive minds seldom experience mental telepathy and spirit recognition.

But amid the hurrying crowd on this dull November day, above the confused street cries, and ceaseless rumble of traffic, suddenly from an entrance float out sweet voices, hymning strains whose tones soothe the unquiet of the heart and brighten the eye with a gleam of cheer.

It is the same mysterious spell that footsore disheartened soldiers upon the battlefield experienced, when the band began to play, how the weary steps quickened.

Now, through the half-opened doorway came the refrain: "He will keep me till the river rolls its waters at my feet." The door closed, but in the minds of several lingered the words with a



charm like a breath from the wooded hills of home.

Down the street to his office passed a well-dressed business man, arriving there many claims pressed upon him, but ever above them sang an angel voice: "He will keep me till the river rolls its waters at my feet." An unwonted moisture came in his eyes, what did it mean, this incessant refrain? Softly it sang—slowly dying away, then coming nearer as if bent upon claiming full attention, receding only to come again with more insistent force.

"This is tiresome! I cannot focus my mind upon anything for that confounded song!" He lit a cigar and sought solace in its fascinations, but over and above him, round about, pervading the very atmosphere, sang now a multitude and then a single voice, childlike in its trust and sweetness.

Angered at last by the apparent hopelessness of escape, he hastily donned overcoat and hat and passed to the busy street below. "A brisk walk will cure me of any morbid fancies," he mentally asserted.

But the same spirit of fascination drew him to the spot where the song had first caused an arrest of thought. All was silent, but a bulletin announced that a convention of unusual interest was in progress. Yielding to a strange impulse to enter, he found a seat near the door, intending to slip back to his office after a brief investigation. But a finely rendered violin solo held him, which was followed by the appearance on the platform of an intelligent looking young woman. Not maidenly beauty, for life had held too stern lessons for her to retain the



girlish freshness, but a charm that far exceeded youthful roundness was evinced in every movement.

"'Twas a glimpse into that soft second summer of womanhood more ripe than the first, when the bud to the blossom has burst, in despite of the stormiest April."

Not a feature possibly that artist would choose as a model, but a face strong and so expressive that every glance made one feel 'she has lived deeply, suffered alone, and speaks from the deep fountain of her heart. A world of pain has been hers, but she now stands forth its conqueror.'

This was the personality that gave added weight to her words.

"Why are we here? Because we believe we are right, and that conviction gives us courage to face the world. Because everywhere over this land women's voices are pleading for better protection for the home.

"Think! Is it any wonder that the true mother heart entreats you to use the utmost powers of your manhood to change conditions?"

"Do we stand here to pose before the world as reformers? Do we expose our womanhood to slight?"

"No! We come here to beseech of you in God's name to make it easier for coming generations to do right."

"Do you proclaim us as unwomanly in this?"

"I marvel much if this view obtains when you consider those blighted buds of womanhood who



are doomed by society to remain forever upon its outskirts, and under the hopeless shadow that only the death angel can give release to. Again I say, is it not time for pure womanhood to plead with you for better safeguards for the nestlings of the home?"

"Do you still ask why we are here?"

"Because we are tired of waiting."

"When womanhood is called by you to go down into the valley of the shadow and 'help God find a life,' that your name may be perpetuated. When you allow conditions to be such that our babies are stolen from our arms, when our fairest girls go into the world and are sent back to us outcasts, do you not think it time to appeal to the best in manhood?"

"You reply: 'Take care of the girls.' But we stand here to say *we refuse to bear the responsibility alone!*"

"Rise in the strength of your manhood and help us."\*

The cultured business man on the rear seat had listened spellbound. The muscles of his face moved visibly. At times one might almost have asserted that a painful struggle was ensuing.

A hasty glance at his watch brought him to the realization of time and place. He had neglected business for nearly an hour. And for what? 'A foolish whim!' he thought.

"When I catch myself displaying such a fool's

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\*NOTE—Several thoughts are quoted in this address because of their helpfulness.



part as this again it will be when my name ceases to be Alexander."

He walked hurriedly down the street as if to quell any rising emotions and plunged into the vortex of business with feverish eagerness.



## CHAPTER II.

"Not one of them falleth without our Father's knowledge."

"Do you believe that, Trueman?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then how can this terrible waste of life go on, and on, apparently without His care?"

"Ah! I see you insert the word apparently. That is well. Can we poor finite beings fathom the Infinite One and say He does not know or care? His word says so, and upon that we must plant our feet."

"True, true!" returned his friend, "but I confess, when I daily hear the wrong side of life, it does seem at times as if the cry and moan that constantly ariseth from innocent victims is unheeded."

Trueman drew himself up to his full height. Strong conviction shone in his face and added weight to his words, as he said in a firm tone, yet reverently, "I believe God that it shall be even as was told me from the Lord." There's my creed, my declaration of hope for the world summed up in that. I stand upon it. There is no other place for my faith to rest upon. God will eventually right these wrongs. He must as truly as He is God."



"Amen!" responded his listener. "But it seems a weary wait. Go with me to the place I have just left and see if your faith in the final outcome of things is not transformed into a burning cry for the coming of the kingdom now!"

"Agreed!"

After several changes of cars the gentlemen arrived at a place which had once been the abode of wealth and culture. Remains of former grandeur greeted the eye, and it almost seemed that ghosts of the dead past peeped out from behind the faded hangings, beseeching the visitors to rescue the once loved home from the den of wickedness into which it had degenerated.

Were family ties, pure and holy, once known within its walls?

Did childhood in all its crystal purity ever play upon that grand staircase?

Was that retreat between the window once the favorite haunt of happy lovers?

To the pure minded men who now breathed its atmosphere, this seemed incredible, yet such was the case. Rollicking, happy children had romped in those once beautiful rooms. A sweet faced, motherly woman had presided over the house. A sturdy, true man had been its head. From its sacred precincts the little white caskets had been carried.

In the spacious parlors had gathered many a happy party of the highest type of manhood and womanhood.

Yonder under the great chandelier had hung a



wedding bell that pealed forth silver chimes as the life march of the fair daughter of the home began.

Is it possible this ill-ventilated place, reeking with filth, is the same?

O, sweet shades of the past! Return not to witness the demolition of your earthly paradise, unless in so doing your presence cleanse the atmosphere and act as guardian angels to the poor little ones whom destiny leaves here.

In one corner, around the once magnificent fireplace, a group of men were seated, smoking pipes and emptying bottles.

No need to scan their faces. A glance was sufficient to bring a shudder to any clean-minded person.

The next room bore marks of a late repast, and about the remains were hovering wan-eyed children with that terrible old look so appalling in those of tender years. A look of cunning was plainly visible on many of the little faces. Babies toddled about in innocence, it is true, but with neglect so plainly stamped upon them it seemed it would move the very fiend himself to have mercy upon their helplessness.

A dark-eyed girl lounged in one corner, a detective story in hand.

A glance showed a pale face but a terrible pair of flashing black eyes.

As the visitors advanced they were met by one of those fierce looks from which they could but recoil, but as she recognized a friend in one of



them, the glance softened to a look of interest, while her face expressed melancholy in the extreme, as if gladness and youthful buoyancy were forever fled.

"Hattie, this is my friend, Mr. Trueman."

The girl gave an indifferent nod toward the stranger and then turned her keen eyes upon her friend, as she said in a plaintive voice: "Mr. Kingsley, are you going to do anything for Marion? Don't bother about me. It's too late to do anything for me; but you can save Marion. Then why," rising to her feet and the fierce look again darkening her face, "*Why* don't you do it?"

"There! Be still, Hattie, and listen to what I say. We are doing all that we can for little Marion, and we will not give you up, either. But these things are slow. Ever since I heard your life story I have been bending every energy toward bettering your condition."

"Talk not of me! I tell you it is too late. I am sixteen years old to-day. Would you think it?"

Mr. Trueman had watched the girl with feelings of interest and sympathy.

She seemed hardly more than a child, yet in her intensity of feeling and the fierce look that played over her face so frequently, she appeared far in the twenties.

"No; don't come here to try to reform me. I tell you it is everlastingly too late. I'm a doomed creature; but save my little sister. She is good. Keep her so!"

The girl dropped down on a chair dejectedly.



Trueman touched his friend's arm. "Take me out of this. I can bear no more."

When revived by the pure air of God's out of doors, Trueman could hardly speak rapidly enough to give vent to his feelings. "For heaven's sake, Kingsley, tell me the story of that poor child. I feel as if her eyes will haunt me to my dying day. Can we not take her out of that place? What about her little sister? O God!" he exclaimed, with all reverence, "how can these things be?"

Leaving Mr. Kingsley to impart the story of this wounded bird, we drop into a neat but unpretending building. Everything of the plainest kind in furniture and decorations. Still you are struck with the general atmosphere of refinement and wholesomeness. A large room with swings and various kinds of apparatus informs you of a gymnasium. You ascend the narrow stairway and find pleasant, sunny rooms and a group of girls busily engaged in sewing.

Two young women of culture, and with strong character revealed in their faces, are imparting instruction to little girls with tangled hair, hair that would be beautiful under the deft touch of a loving mother. But alas! whose little heads had never known such gentleness, much less their hearts the warmth of mother love.

A study of these faces as they circle about their teachers is well worth our time; but we pause only with one. A mat of dark locks that would curl and twist into the most charming ringlets, as if defying its environment to despoil its beauty.



Pushing back the wayward curls, a very good forehead is revealed, and you look into a pair of gray eyes that are honest and appealing, if not beautiful. Something strange—intensity it may be—burns in the eyes as they are again bent upon their work.

So attracted are you to this child, you hardly notice when the work is folded away and the little circle are singing, until you catch a sudden brightening of the hitherto cloudy face before you. The hopelessness and 'don't care' look have vanished. The child is transformed. She is singing with all her might. Her soul is in her face and she stands forth for the moment, the being God meant her to be, earnestness and strength lighting up every feature.

After the song the children reluctantly departed, most of them lingering to follow their teachers to the car. Little Marion was the last to go, clinging to the kind hand that held hers after the car was in motion.

"I wish I could always live with her!" exclaimed the small lady, drawing the ragged looking cloak about her to hide the still more forlorn looking dress beneath.

"I could be as good as she is if I had a chance." But as she drew near the place called home—"I hate to live here. I've always hated it. I wasn't bigger than Tommy when I tried to run away. There's the youngsters screaming. I wonder who's killed now! Poor toddlers! I love them, and Hattie, too, when her eyes are not wild and scare me. But



Miss Homesworth is an angel and God must love her a sight more than He does the rest of us, 'cause her pa never swore at her. I don't believe she ever heard a bad word all her days. Still, pa's a angel himself alongside of ma."

She concluded the last sentence with a grin hideous to behold, so utterly was it lacking in respect for the one called mother.

As she disappeared within the foul place, her face lost all trace of the exalted look of a few moments previous. It was replaced by one of open defiance and dogged looking stubbornness.

One of many a hungry crowd who get a glimpse of something higher, and then by force of circumstances stronger than they are skilled to meet, are thrust back into the teeming whirlpool of evil.



### CHAPTER III.

A sweet-faced child at the window, wonderingly watching the raindrops; inside the cheery room two other children playing.

A sudden pause in the hilarity. "Vera Trueman, you needn't 'spect God to answer your prayers ever!"

The culprit thus addressed looked up with anything but terror in her merry face.

"I guess God likes me 'bout as much as He does you, and what about *your* praying?"

Truly how like the criticism of some children of larger growth. . .

"Well, I saw God emptying all the water buckets and tubs He had, just now."

Vera, deeply interested. "Did you? Why didn't you tell me in time to see?"

"'Cause I am 'Mrs. Be done by as you did,' and you never told me when you went out to sail your paper boats in the mud puddles."

"Well, if you didn't stick so tight to your 'Water Babies,' or some other old book, I'd 'vited you."

"To do to others as I would that they should



GLADYS



do to me will make me always kind and good as children ought to be," warbled a sweet voice, as a bright looking young woman came into the room and was immediately surrounded by the three small people and quite overpowered by the numerous arms and as many small limbs that scrambled and clung, while a rain of kisses threatened to eclipse the outdoor patter.

"O mama! God is so busy spilling water all over the earth I don't believe He will notice a bit if I don't get my Sunday school lesson. I *do* want to finish 'Water Babies.' I hate to study my Sunday school lesson anyway!"

"Mamma, God will answer my prayers soon as He will Gladys', won't He? She said He wouldn't."

"Me too love mamma, Dod and everybody!" piped a shrill little voice, as the baby finally succeeded in establishing herself in the post of honor, on mamma's lap.

"Oh, you little blessings!" laughed mamma, as she smoothed her hair and replaced some falling pins. "I think you are the sweetest trio on earth!" She gave the baby a hug and kissed the cheek of the two children who clung about her neck.

"Come on, mamma, *please*, and let me read you 'Water Babies'," begged the book worm of the family.

"No! We are going to play Queen Mamma and that we are all royal princesses," asserted Vera, whose ceaseless activity sometimes drove her mother nearly frantic.

"I'se doin' to be your 'tween, Ve, and mamma



our 'ittle dirl," chirped the ever responsive baby, who was peacemaker in all family jars.

But with tact worthy of a diplomat, the mother conciliated her rebellious subjects, uniting all in a common cause by the suggestion, "Suppose we make some candy for papa?"

Down stairs they rushed, even Gladys forgetting her beloved book in the desire to surprise papa.



Many consider such things too much trouble, but this young matron felt that the cultivation of thoughtfulness for others was well worth the hour's time.

"But the sticky fingers and clothes!" exclaimed Mrs. Nicety to Mrs. Trueman one day, when she



chanced to call and was invited into the scene of juvenile activities. "How *do* you stand it, Mrs. Trueman? I never could!" And she smoothed down the curls of a beautiful looking child at her side, who was dressed like a fairy, but whose lovely eyes had a wistful look as she gazed longingly at the dancing tots before her, who, reveling in long sleeved aprons, were stirring maple sugar into a creamy foam.

Gladys and Vera had become quite adepts, and delighted the little visitor by pouring the sugar into heart-shaped tins and presenting them to her.

"Here's our hearts, O take and keep them!" sang Vera, as she danced up to her little caller.

"Vera!" said mamma, reprovingly.

"Well, they sang that at church, so it's a good song," responded the daring little mischief, whose quick wit and ofttimes shocking remarks were alike the consternation and amusement of the family.

Baby Eleanor, the picture of infantile bliss, had a tendency to cleave very closely to anything she came in contact with, which caused Mrs. Nicety to withdraw as soon as possible, mentally remarking that while Mrs. Trueman was certainly a charming woman, she had strange notions.

On this rainy day, however, they were secure from intruders and the spirit of pure glee reigned supreme. It was difficult to tell whether mother or children enjoyed the frolic most, but certainly when papa returned, thoroughly drenched, he



found not only a tempting dish of sweets prepared by loving hands, but four very happy roguish looking people.

"I never was so thankful in all my life for this home," half sighed the head of the house, as Gladys brought his slippers, while Vera and baby danced about like two small sprites.

"What is the undertone? You seem half sad to-night, Noble?"

"Wait till I tell you where I have been to-day with Kingsley, and you will not wonder at the sigh. We are blest above measure, my love." The light deepened in his eyes as he smiled affectionately at the group.

"Papa is our king, mamma our queen, and we are all royal princesses," said Vera.

"Yes, this is a royal family, Vera, and we are going to make this home a beacon light in a dark world."

His wife divined something unusual troubled him tonight.

"There's nothing upon earth half so holy as the love of a child," said Noble, as he gazed down into the deep azure of baby's eyes and stroked Vera's flying curls. "Gladys, papa brought you a new book."

"Oh, papa!" Another pair of soft arms embraced him with ardency enough to captivate a much harder heart than his.

Heaven smiles upon scenes like this. How sadly



many homes clustered near contrasted. Mrs. Nicety's, with her lonely little flower growing up companionless, with half her childhood joys missed, and the different phases of her nature undeveloped. Oh, the pity of it.



Lo! I have given thee  
To understand my presence and to feel  
My fulness. I have filled thy lips with power;  
I have raised thee nigher to the sphere of heaven,  
Man's first, last home; and thou with ravished  
senses  
Listenest the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.

—*Tennyson.*



## CHAPTER IV.

"If any man open the door, I will come in."

Mr. Alexander was not an attendant at church. He paid for a pew in one of the most fashionable temples of worship and upon rare occasions accompanied his family.

A strictly honest, and in every sense a moral man, he had hitherto been content to square his life by the rule of highest integrity.

In passing homeward one evening he was struck by the words at the beginning of this chapter.

So deeply did they impress him that he turned back and by some strange influence, before he was really aware, his feet were turning into the beautifully lighted building, and still ere he had fully determined to do so, was led by the usher to a seat in excellent view of the speaker.

"What a face!" was his thought, as he gazed at the fine intellectual bearing of the one before him.

Still, that was not the secret of the power of the man, but a light that emanated from him, the deep serenity that looked out of the eyes—trustful as a child's, a face strong, pure, and manly.

"I never saw so wonderful a face," he thought, gazing as if fascinated.



“‘If *any* man will open the door I will come in.’ Surely he knows what he is talking about, for his is a face so spirituale that it shows some power within, an animating principle. He said, ‘If *any* man’; but I could never be religious. It wouldn’t work down at the office.”

But the clear voice went on in a way that centered attention to the exclusion of reflection.

“A little child came into the world a few years ago and grew up as other little ones in the home, but after a time the parents discovered that their birdling was mute. That wonderful organ of the human scale refused to perform its part in the grand choral chant of life. The mechanism of the ear, too, was undeveloped. What a deprivation to be unconscious of all the sweet melody of life! O the sorrow of the father’s heart! He determined to do all that money could for this afflicted one, and taking his wee daughter of five years to a fine oral school he left her with sadness. After some months the child was taken to a public entertainment in company with many others. The father learning of it, slipped in unobserved and occupied a rear seat. His child appeared upon the platform. A picture was held in front of the little one. In a clear voice she exclaimed: ‘Father!’

“The man on the back seat heard it and tears bathed his face. When the entertainment was concluded, the great broad-shouldered man rushed down to the front, his face a mixture of smiles and tears.

“The little child saw him and ran to meet him,



He clasped her in his arms, while she cried, 'Father! father! father!'

"To feel with that father and child one must have experienced a similar scene, but the suggestiveness of the picture. Many men and women to-day are deaf and dumb to all the calls of the spirit. They do not hear that gentle voice full of sweetness and more bewitching than anything earthly, saying to them in the midst of the cares of business: '*If any man will open the door, I will come in.*' On hearing it they are dumb.

"There is a most beautiful symphony being sung around, about and over us. It forms an undertone of life, and listened to has power to soothe and heal our fevered pulse.

"As the sunlight shines into dark corners and transforms them into glistening stalactites, as it touches gloomy mountain peaks into rare tints of surpassing beauty, so with this door opened, the light will gild and flood the life until the sorrows are softened, the stress and strain lifted.

"With the door closed, how can one endure the pressure of trouble that weighs the spirit, how battle with temptations that haunt ghostlike every pathway?

"*'I will come in!'*

"Every one has experienced the difference made in a circle of people by the sudden entrance of a superior man or woman. In physique they may be ordinary, but if endowed with intellectual vigor, a bright spontaneity, or merely large-hearted



thoughtfulness for others, how they light up and transform a dull room!

"We kindle our low fires anew in the glow of their presence, we think kinder thoughts, morbid fancies take flight, our horizon is enlarged and we rise, for the time being, at least, to their level.

"But the coming in of the Glorious One alone can help us maintain the height.

"Who would remain forever in the valley ignorant of the wonders about him when 'a toilsome ascent leads onward to a wide and glorious view?'

"If King Edward or any of the royal family were to send any person in this audience a note saying: 'If any man will open the door, I will come in,' how the doors would fly open! Why, I venture to say not one would be closed. And how elated every one would feel whose abode was thus honored. They would never get over talking of it. 'I entertained King Edward! He condescended to dine with *me*!' How flattered and lifted above those less fortunate they would feel.

"But listen! Beneath life's turmoil and din I catch an undertone of melody. Down the street come angelic voices thrilling one through and through.

"What is it? Who comes here?

"Now the air resounds with a mighty chorus grander than the Messiah, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates! Lift them up ye everlasting doors!' 'Why? Why?' exclaimed the interested throng. 'Who is it?'



“‘*That the king of glory may come in!*’ responds the mighty chorus.

“Floods of roseate light glint and tint every particle of the landscape.

“‘The King of Kings and Lord of Lords,’ chant the voices.

“‘The mighty Potentate before whom the kings of the earth bow themselves. He is the king of glory!’

“‘If *any* man will open the door,’ the ‘King of Glory,’ not of England, will come in and do him honor.

“Who would choose the paltry, the trivial, when the true royalties are within our grasp?

“At some time, it may be in the silence of the night, when we try to forget our pressing cares, that we catch an echo of the strain, and we suddenly think seriously of these things. It may be in the crowded car, a remark calls to mind life’s deeper phase, or perchance a song will vibrate upon our ears long after the singer has passed by, awaking something within that till now had slumbered.”

Mr. Alexander had listened with intense interest. He started at the mention of the song. How like his own experience of a few weeks previous. Two lines only had been wafted to him. But how they had repeated themselves to his consciousness. ‘He will keep me till the river rolls its waters at my feet.’

At the recollection, a strange feeling came upon him, and he, the influential man of the world,



who was recognized by those in business circles as a leader, suddenly felt for the first time in his life a sense of his own powerlessness, and for a moment the need of something higher than himself to lean upon.

"Confound it!" he muttered under his breath, "I must be turning into a pigmy. I will get out of here as soon as they sing."

Another look at the noble face of the speaker, however, riveted his attention.

"Within the citadel of every human soul, at some time, there must be a battle waged to the very gates, but above that seething tide of despair, anger, and sin, the choral chant sings on. Stop but a moment. Hush your heart to listen and you will hear a royal announcement that will quiet the din of battle and make a calm of the tempest of sorrow. Need I reiterate the words whose music goes on forever and forever until it becomes in reality the grand song of creation and of the aeons yet to be?

"'If any man open the door I will come in.'"



“He stood with one foot on the threshold,  
With a cloud on his boyish face,  
While his city companions urged him  
To enter the gorgeous place.  
‘There’s nothing to fear, old fellow!  
It isn’t a lion’s den;  
Here waits you a royal welcome  
From the lips of the bravest men.’

“‘Twas the old, old voice of the tempter  
That sought in the old, old way  
To lure with a lying promise  
The innocent feet astray.  
‘You’d think it was Bluebeard’s closet  
To see how you stare and shrink!  
I tell you there’s naught to harm you;  
It’s only a game and a drink.’

“He heard the words with a shudder,  
‘It’s only a game and a drink!’  
And his lips made bold to answer  
‘But what would my mother think?’  
The name that his heart held dearest  
Had started a secret spring,  
And forth from the wily tempter  
He fled like a haunted thing.

“Away till the glare of the city  
And its gilded halls of sin  
Are shut from his sense and vision,  
The shadows of night within;



Away till his feet have bounded  
O'er fields where his childhood trod;  
Away in the name of virtue  
And the strength of his mother's God.

"What though he were branded 'A coward!'  
In the blazoned halls of vice;  
On the page where the angel keepeth  
The record of deeds well done,  
That night was the story written  
Of a glorious battle won.  
And he stood by his home in the starlight  
All guiltless of sword and shield—  
A braver and nobler victor  
Than the hero of bloodiest field."



## CHAPTER V.

Marshall Allen was the eldest child, his mother's pride and stay. A year previous the angels of light had entered his home, leaving a sudden darkness to replace the brief illumination.

The father was taken when just in the prime of manhood. A sudden announcement told him that his stay in this sphere of usefulness was ended. He was a recalled ambassador, and so the boy, his namesake, must step out into the world and help the younger children with their education. All this and he not through his high school course, and upon which his heart was set.

After a battle with himself, he set forth like the conqueror he was, to make his way in the world.

Knowing little of city life, its dazzle and brilliancy was most alluring.

Being naturally bright, and of a winning personality, Marshall soon found employment in one of the large department stores, where he readily became popular.

Like many another without a friend to advise, he drifted into one of the cheapest boarding houses, where the society was mostly of a questionable kind.

Several times he attempted to read a verse or two his mother had marked in his Bible, but



soon gave it up, as the sneers of his roommates were unbearable to his sensitive spirit. Hence that Guide Book, so necessary to his young life, was placed in the bottom of his trunk.

Little by little he mingled with those about him, at the same time feeling a repugnance the pure mind must ever experience in contact with evil.

Still, in seeing the city, as many evenings were spent, he had resisted all dares and taunts, as well as pressing invitations, to enter one of the gilded palaces and drink with the boys.

But to-night he wavered. "What's the harm? I don't need to take anything. I believe I will just go in and look around and stop this everlasting torment of the boys. There's a nice hot lunch served free. I might save my lunch money every day and sent it to mother."

In just such alluring words of suggestion does the tempter gain an entrance, even causing one to think they may be doing a really helpful service.

O boy! standing there upon the threshold, in the flush of young manhood, with no stain upon your purity, *know* that another step taken within and you leave behind the most valuable gifts of life!

Ere you enter, stoop and take from off your brow the crown of Purity, Innocence, and Truth. Lay these aside, put them on the steps behind you. Leave there also that bright, clear, open-hearted look, for your face never will wear it again in exactly the degree it does now, after you have sipped the poison from this fountain of evil.



Lay aside there on the steps, too, your future dreams of usefulness. You intend to become a noble man like the father whose example has influenced you from childhood, and whose dying message comes back to you now, stinging you into remorse. Think for a moment you are again in the room where the shadow of death lingers, mother and the children cluster around the bed, you step forward to support your mother's failing strength, then the pale lips, almost as white as the pillow upon which they rest, part. Bend down, miss no word of that dear father's last counsel, "And now, my boy, brother and father you must be. Your hour is come to take up manhood's banner in its stainless purity and bear it safely through the battlefield of life. I leave it to you to guard and part with only with your dying breath."

Lay down that prized banner, boy, entrusted with such faith to your integrity! Out there upon the cold stones it lies! That which should bear you on to victory. Enter now—if you will, having thrown aside life's most precious jewels, trampled upon your father's holy trust, broken your word of truth to that faithful mother whose pride you are! *Go in!*

Believe me, angel convoys are often sent to guide those willing to be led out of danger to a safe shelter.

At this moment an angel stooped and interposed his buckler and the youth escaped unscathed.



## CHAPTER VI.

“That which is can never not have been, facts are as solid as the pyramids!

A thing done is written in the rocks, yea, with an iron pen.”

The victory of Marshall Allen emboldened him next morning in meeting his companions.

He knew they would sneer and call him “milk-sop,” but he felt raised head and shoulders above them.

An awakening had come. He realized that he could not remain where he was and keep his character unsullied.

After his return last night he wrote several pages to his mother, pouring out all that happened, just as he used to at home, and what strength came to him in doing it.

Ah, if the boys who leave the firesides only knew with what eagerness the folks at home watch the mails, how much more frequently they would brighten the home nest.

Marshall had conquered one temptation and been brave enough to confess his struggle to mother, who, happily, until their separation, had been the confidant of her boy.

The mother who maintains such a close relationship may rest assured that the boys and girls will



not drift far with such a cable attached to them. It is like the everlastingness of the love of God, a cable that cannot be broken, this heart to heart confidence of mother and child.

Marshall's home, though humble, was a true one. Father and mother were united in heart as well as in name. The children were welcomed as they came, even when the money to supply all their needs was a problem. Still the busy mother found time to be interested in all sorts of childish joys and struggles, with a word of encouragement for the despondent, or help for the wayward one. Behold the result. The natural sequence is in evidence now, for mother love has saved her boy in the moment of direst temptation.

Were years in vain that she patiently denied herself many social pleasures that she might be her children's companion?

Were our eyes not too gross, doubtless we might see the halo encircling every such true woman's brow.

A mother true to her trust has saved her boy! High reward even here. And what awaits such a woman when, as the result of her loyalty and devotion, many lives in the future are lifted and ennobled through the influence of her children?

After bearing the taunts of his companions for a week longer, Marshall escaped from the tainted atmosphere and found his way to a more respectable place. He slept in a tiny attic bedroom, cold in winter and which would be stifling in the sum-



mer. He took his meals at a cheap restaurant, a very lonely and homesick boy.

"Better loneliness than disgrace," he said determinedly, as he wended his way to his cold room,



MARSHALL

whose only cheer was a bright lamp which stood upon a plain little stand. He sat down to think. "I don't care if I can save enough in this little den. Bert can stay in school this year."



The brave lad whistled a lively air to drum his courage up. Suddenly an inspiration came to him. He jumped up and knocked his heels together to the imminent danger of upsetting the lamp. "I'll do it! 'Pon my word I will!" He hurried into his coat and hat and was in the street before he happened to think he did not know where to go for the information he desired. This somewhat slowed his steps, but did not cool his enthusiasm.

"Where will I go to find out about it?" he murmured half audibly, looking along the street for signs.

Just then a nicely dressed man stepped up to him and asked him in the blandest way if he could be of any assistance.

"Oh, yes, indeed! It is very kind of you to be interested in a stranger," our dear homesick boy replied.

And in the joy of finding anyone in the great city to even notice him, his heart warmed toward the kind stranger, and he readily told his story and of his present desire to find a night school and fit himself for something more paying than a clerk.

"You are just the boy I am looking for. Come with me and I will put you in the way of something worth while."

Marshall mentally embraced him on the spot and his boyish heart glowed at the promise of friendship quite as much as over the prospective position.

To his unsophisticated eyes the gentleman seemed



a hero, a noble character, doubtless a philanthropist who spent his life in going about doing just such deeds of kindness.

"He must be very wealthy," thought our boy, as he glanced admiringly at the elegantly dressed gentleman.

He already felt well established on the road to fortune. Thus aided by his new friend, he would become a lawyer, and his mother should have all the luxuries her refined nature knew so well how to appreciate, yet had been denied.

Thus swiftly does youth paint glowing pictures upon the canvas of the mind.

His friend, for so Marshall called him, led him into a brilliantly lighted hotel and ordered wine and cigars to be sent to number eleven. Marshall shrank back and looked for the first time critically at his companion, but was met by such apparent kindness that his fears were disarmed.

"Come up to my apartments and I will tell you how you can get rich quickly. You are far too fine a fellow to plod along on a mere pittance. I see what is in you, a sharp youngster. I'll make a man of you."

Thus appealing to the boy's dearest hopes, Marshall gladly followed him.

"My!" he exclaimed, and drew his breath quickly as he was ushered into all the splendor and sumptuousness of velvet carpets and great mirrors, luxurious chairs and beautiful pictures.

His companion noticed with a gleam of pleasure, the surprise and delight that the face before



him revealed. "He'll do!" was his mental comment, as he led him through the suite of rooms to a cozy one at the rear. Here they sat down and were soon conversing as if old-time friends, Marshall telling him of his entire past life.

The gentleman opposite never took his eyes from him and Marshall felt a growing admiration.

"How sympathetic he is!" thought the boy, and what wonderful good luck had come to him, an hour before friendless and desolate, now befriended by a man who seemed almost like a prince. It was like the fairy tales of his childhood.

He was willing to toil incessantly to become rich and own all such luxuries about him. For Marshall had the pluck and determination of earnest manhood.

During the brief interval of a few moments he had graduated from a law school with honors, tried eminent cases before the grand jury and was already an aspirant for the grave office of judge. So swift an artist is fancy.

He was so eager to make real all these delightful pictures, that he asked rather abruptly about the best night school and its cost.

The gentleman put his hand on the boy's arm in a firm way. "Pshaw! you don't want to do that sort of thing. Go there and dig all night and lose your rosy cheeks. No, indeed! I told you I'd make a man of you. Trust to me. Fact is, I took a great fancy to you the minute I laid eyes on you. I said, 'There's the chap for me.' I believe in helping a good fellow like you. There's plenty of dirty



fellows who would like the fun of dragging you down, but I'll be your champion and see you through. Say!" leaning over and bringing his handsome face nearer the boy's, "What do you say to transferring your trunk and belongings right over here? I'm a man of strong likes and dislikes. Now it's lucky that I took a notion to you that first glance, for I'll do well by you. I intend you shall share these rooms with me and be my valet, or aid de camp, if that suits you better. Any way, I feel like I could almost make you my son and heir."

Marshall's head seemed fairly spinning with his good fortune.

A silver bell tinkled and a white aproned individual entered, bearing glasses and a bottle of sparkling brilliancy. He placed these on the table and disappeared as noiselessly as he came.

Marshall fairly rubbed his eyes. He seemed dazed, dreaming. He had resolutely refused to go in where there was wine. Now it had come to him.

What should he do? How could he be discourteous to the kind friend before him? The only one in the great city who had cared to aid him, and then, if he refused, all these beautiful prospects would vanish, and he must go back, back out of all this luxury to his bare room and plodding life and live on six dollars a week for ever so long perhaps, when he could help his mother and the children so much by staying here. No; this one time he must do it. He would *have* to take the tiny glass before him. No harm in that. He need



never do it again, and this was a circumstance in which he must yield or lose.

He touched the glass. His friend smiled at him in a fascinating way, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said: "Now, my boy, I'll drink your health and future success." Their glasses clicked and Marshall had just raised the sparkling nectar to his lips, when the door abruptly opened, and without announcement, three persons entered. Two were half supporting a third, whom they deposited upon the sofa.

"Tim disgraced us all!" said another finely dressed gentleman, as he threw himself into a chair, and the host poured out a glass of wine for him.

Marshall had replaced his upon the table untasted, in his surprise at the intrusion.

He was much interested in the newcomers, taking in every detail of features and dress. Their conversation now absorbed him.

"Yes, the game's up! That blubber of a Tim got so gloriously funny that he let the cat out of the bag. No chance there. And I say, Mack, we've got to be mighty careful or they will be looking in here on us."

Mack, as we perceive our host is called, administered a vigorous kick under the table, but the speaker, irritated by the injury done his tender anatomy, roared forth: "What you kicking me for?"

Mack darted a look of anxiety at the young face before him and in his most oily voice begged the gentleman's pardon, and proceeded to introduce his



young friend, whom he said he intended to adopt as his own son.

"Hurrah!" said the recently enraged individual. "You'll be a splendid fifth wheel! Mack, you're a knowing one. Just the innocence necessary to pull the wool over people's eyes. Say, youngster, you're a good one. I see it is in your eye. Never been away from your mother and S. S. before, have you?"

"No, sir!" responded Marshall in a ringing voice, "but I judge that you and that poor fellow over there," pointing to the sofa, "either never had a mother, or else you've been away from her a very long while."

"Nobly said, my boy," put in Mack, seeing the men were about to open the eyes of his protege too quickly, and trying to divert the conversation into a safe channel.

"Well, 'pon my word, Mack, you are getting pious. Been to revival services lately? Sounds like you've got religion."

Mack's anger in being thwarted with the lad, caused him to dart such a look at the offender as savored not in the least of piety.

Marshall did not see the glance, although he was much perturbed. Still he clung to his new friend, thinking, "Oh, well, he's all right, and is disgusted, as I am. Probably he would put them out, only he is too much of a gentleman."

The others had been sleepy listeners, but the last remark seemed to arouse one of them.

"I say, Bill, I wouldn't fool with a little kid



like that!" pointing to Marshall in a way that made the indignant blood mount to his temples at the thrust at his dawning manhood.

"A little kid, indeed! I'm no child," he said, rising and reaching for his overcoat. But his affable friend detained him. "Don't mind them," he whispered. "They drank a little too much, but they are splendid good fellows and will think a sight of you when you become one of us."

Marshall recoiled. "Be one of them!" He looked into his supposed friend's face. It seemed incredible that so perfect a gentleman and one so handsome could be a deceiver. He was about to take the proffered hand with the feeling that he, at least, must be true, but an inner consciousness seemed to hold him doubtful.

What was the difference between his friends of some weeks previous and these? Merely that these were surrounded with wealth and a small degree of refinement.

His boyish heart quivered in pain over his first lesson in distrust of what it had deemed, for even so brief a time, worthy.

"I must go," stammered Marshall.

"Leave me when I am going to do so much for you? No, no, my dear boy; I cannot hear of it. Come, take this glass of wine and we will talk over the night school, if you are really set upon it; but let you go, I cannot!"

All at once Marshall felt himself, as it were, in the coils of a serpent. A horror seized him. How



could he escape? Three powerful men against him. But he determined to do so at once.

"I must bid you good evening, or I will not rise in time for work," Marshall said, as he saw with alarm that the clock on the mantel pointed at twelve.

"Ho, ho! good little boy. Don't leave us and talk of going to work. Come here, my lad. I didn't mean to scare you out. We'll teach you how to live on the fat of the land, and let those who will, be such fools as to plod on at work. Come, don't leave us. I'm getting fond of you myself. I don't wonder Mack picked you up. You haven't a friend in the city, I'll warrant, and we'll be your friends."

Bill grew more earnest as he felt the prize was to elude them.

"Your board and drink shan't cost you a penny. Come, we will give you money to send to your precious family you're so fond of. See here!" displaying a roll of bills, "Take off your overcoat, sit down and drink this wine and I'll advance you this bill," holding up a five before him. "All you've got to do is to manage some little matters of business for us and act as our confidential agent." Advancing to Marshall, he half encircled him with his arm.

But the temptation was passed. His whole being revolted, and his one thought was of escape.

He saw the determination on his supposed friend's face was seconded by this burly, Bill. He eagerly scanned the third man's visage, and in it



he thought he detected a gleam of genuine kindness, although he was still smarting under the sting of insulted manhood.

Mack, the polished, drew him into a window seat and attempted to interest him in some fine pictures of the wonderful city so amazing to him. Ordinarily they would have charmed him, but he was meditating only how to become free.

He glanced at the windows, but they were securely barricaded. He realized this was dead of night. If he only could find a fire escape!

Meanwhile the bland gentleman at his side was rather uselessly exhausting his eloquence, as the boy showed by his restlessness and inattention.

"Come and play just one game of billiards," said the wily tempter, intending to play so poorly that his victim would have the excitement of winning easily and thus prolong his stay.

"No, thank you; I have stayed too long now and must go."

Marshall reached for his hat, but a sudden movement toward him of Bill, chilled his heart blood not a little. He was no coward, but to be in the presence of such men at that hour of night, in a strange house of which he had no idea of the exits, or even the name or location, was sufficient to strike terror to a much older man.

Marshall saw it was useless to resist physically and that he could only effect his escape by diplomacy.

"Well, while I'm here I might as well entertain you," he said, with a nonchalant air he was far



from feeling, for he shivered so he feared it would be perceptible.

The thought had come to him that he might play them to sleep and then slip away. So he seated himself at the piano, hoping the noise would disturb other sleepers in the hotel and they would have the music stopped. Hence he played his gayest tunes.

Having inherited his mother's musical ability, he played almost anything he ever heard entirely by ear, having never had the technic of music, but showing decided talent in expression.

Perhaps he played better now than ever before, for he seemed playing for his very life, for honor, for home and mother.

The men gathered about him charmed, and he thought with consternation: "Perhaps they will like me better than ever and I will never get away."

Still he played on and on, yet no one came to silence the disturbance or open an avenue of deliverance.

Alas! had he but known that this portion of the hotel opened upon an alley, one of the darkest and most dreadful in the city, and that rescue was not likely to come in response to his call, his stout heart certainly would have quailed.

Slowly the moments sped away. One o'clock! rang out so loudly that Marshall stopped playing. "Will morning never come?" he thought.

Mack was more delighted with the boy than ever. "Bless me! I've got to hang on to that little



chap. He's a great one, a fine drawing card. Nobody would ever doubt him. I believe he could help us out of almost any little scrape; but it's ticklish business to handle such a good boy, too easily shocked, you see. I'll have to turn saint to win him."

Turning to Marshall he patted him on the back affectionately. "Say, boy; that's fine! It sort of makes a man think of his better days. Can't you give us a song about something good, Sunday school, etc.?"

Marshall was touched. Possibly he could work on these hard fellows, as he now felt them to be, and effect his release.

He reseated himself at the piano and poured forth his soul in "Home, Sweet Home."

A strange scene. The bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked boy, virtually a prisoner, surrounded by these men and their drunken companion at this hour of night, sitting there singing, "Home, Sweet Home."

Perhaps the men clustered about him had never known a home or real mother, for only one betrayed any emotion.

He eyed the boy with deepening interest and muttered to himself, "Poor kid!"

As for Marshall, singing of that home so pure and sweet, made him feel more desperate than ever to get away.

Despair had begun to settle upon him, when Mack startled them all by a warning sound: "Hist! Scatter!" he said, in a hoarse whisper, which sounded like a serpent's hiss.



Bill and the other men disappeared, but where Marshall could not discover, for he had little time to speculate. Mack pushed him ahead of him as he touched a secret spring, a door in what seemed a solid wall flew open and Marshall found himself in a small dark room, lighted only by a port hole, through which shone one single star for a few moments and then left them in rayless gloom.

Marshall was now wholly given up to intense fear which seemed to paralyze all his powers. Even the elegant gentleman beside him crouched in the darkness and perceptibly shuddered.

A loud noise added to the dreadfulness, voices many and rough. Evidently the place was being raided by the police.

"Great Cæsar! They've got him now!" whispered Mack, as a heavy body rolled upon the floor and poor Tim had a rude awakening.

After much questioning they took off the poor drunken fellow and dead silence reigned.

O how Marshall's heart pounded! Would he, too, be discovered and arrested with these villains? The anguish of his mother arose before him, and to think he was locked in the dense darkness with this man whom he had no doubt now was a scoundrel, perhaps a murderer!

How eternally slow seemed the passing of the moments.

After the clock had tolled two and no sound was audible, Mack began to breathe more naturally. "Mighty near goners that time, lad. I wonder how Bill and the rest got out? Mind you, we've



got some long hours to spend here yet ere we dare venture out, and then they may be on the scent and swoop down upon us."

Marshall's response was only a heavy sigh.

"Hard on you, boy, isn't it? Really, I'm sorry to get you into all this first thing, but we ain't such bad fellows as it looks."

So with an occasional remark from his companion the seemingly endless night wore away, and in the gray of early dawn, while those most apt to keep late hours were asleep, Mack stole out to investigate. He still had no idea of letting the valuable youth escape, and was about to secrete himself again, when Marshall walked boldly past and darted out of the door. Mack dared not follow, yet had he known it, Marshall was still in his power, for he was totally ignorant of an exit and found himself in a maze, not knowing which door to try. Several were locked, but one yielded to his pressure, and he discovered a narrow winding passage.

Where it led to, he did not pause to consider. He hoped it meant deliverance.

His hope revived as he reached a door at the end, but alas! it was locked!

What could he do? He dared not go back. He must somehow get through that door. He glanced up and discovered a closed transom, unused evidently. "If he could only get that open!"

A search through his pockets revealed nothing to aid him but his jackknife. Besides, how could he hang up there on nothing while he opened it?



It seemed quite an impossible feat even to an agile boy, but desperation inspired him to try.

It was still profoundly quiet except for an occasional milk cart rumbling by.

As he groped about in the semi-darkness he touched a rod, and with what joy discovered it opened the transom a little way. He placed one foot upon the door knob and by main force pushed it open, but it had long been disused and the hinges were rusty. What was his dismay when the whole thing went crashing to the floor!

For a full minute he was cold with terror. Then realizing it was then or never, he pulled himself up and through the opening, fully expecting to be nabbed by a policeman the moment his feet touched terra firma.

However, the policeman who should have been guarding the public safety was having a comfortable nap in a neighboring saloon; so hatless, our boy sped down the street and never paused until safe inside the door of his temporary home.

Never did a modest little room look more beautiful to human eyes!

Marshall sank beside the bed, burying his face in his hands, as he uttered perhaps the first real prayer of his life: "Thank God! thank God! Keep me a good boy always! Amen."

The events of the past night were written upon the tablets of his mind with "an iron pen" and made an indelible impression upon his whole after life.



## CHAPTER VII.

Certainly one need not be told that Christmas was at hand, for the very atmosphere radiated it.

The shops displayed such wonderful devices, one questioned if there was any mechanism under the sun not grouped together to perplex the mind of the bewildered purchaser.

Although you went down town with your mind fully made up as to your Christmas list, behold at every counter such an array of tempting bargains, your brain became confused to the degree that it was apt to be beguiled into purchasing the wrong gift.

"I declare!" said one lady to another. "I wish Christmas would never come. I am tired out every year, spend more than I ought, and then do not feel that half my gifts are appreciated."

"Wish Christmas would not come?" exclaimed her friend. "Christ's birthday,?" she added softly.

"Oh, no; of course not. But how many among that motley throng we rushed through to-day do you suppose thought of the meaning of Christmas?"

"I am afraid it is too true," responded Katherine, "but mamma always made it such a beautiful time, that I cannot think of it entirely upon the gift side. I remember when a wee girlie she took me upon her lap and explained why we kept



Christmas, and although we had the merriest of times, there was always an undertone that was sweet and helpful. I am sure mamma taught us the sweet spirit of the Christ child without our being aware of it, for she never preached."

Tears sprang into her friend's eyes. "Yes, Katherine, I have no doubt of it, but you know there are not half so many Mrs. Worthington's as there should be."

"Thank you. If I can only mold my babies three, into women like unto her, I am sure I ask nothing higher," Katherine replied, with happy tears shining in her eyes. "But I am not capable as mamma. Still, I try to be what she was to us, and just now our home is the most busy and happy nest you can imagine. The children are making their gifts and they inveigle their papa into assisting them. We are having a glorious time packing a box of outgrown clothing, books and toys, for the settlement work. The children are delighted in depositing their treasures in the wonderful box. I believe it helps sweeten their tempers more than anything else, and I really think they are enjoying it as much as they will their tree."

"I never thought of doing that with mine. Your children are delighted with their gifts, no doubt?"

Mrs. Trueman smiled in the affirmative.

"That is so trying to me. Leo is never pleased with anything he receives. "Why didn't you get me a blue sled?" if it happens to be red. "I don't want a stove, but a dolly's bed," sighed Gennie,



whom I was sure of having suited with my selection."

The lady looked sad as she gave this little glimpse into her home life.

"I feel as though half the Christmas giving is wrong," Katherine replied. 'Have to gifts' were what my brave mother took a strong stand against. 'Give true love gifts or none,' was her motto. So we had little of that burdensome side to contend with."

The young mothers had arrived at the Trueman doorway.

"Come in and see my urchins. No doubt they are in mischief in spite of the shower of good resolutions with which they pelted me on my departure."

"I will, just to get a wholesome bit of encouragement to take home with me," said Mrs. Thomas, with a sigh.

They ascended the stairs quite noiselessly and overheard the following dialogue:

"I don't care if you think I'm not a Christian, Gladys Trueman, I am going to give my dear precious Susan Jane to Mrs. Bridge's little heathen girl way over the water!"

"Well, the preacher said Sunday it's better to keep your temper than to give things all the time," responded Miss Gladys, in a tone of rebuke.

"I 'spose it's best to do both," the little rogue replied, with a merry laugh, "but it's hard on me. I'm awfully sorry I was bad to you, Gladys;" and



Vera put her arm around her sister's neck to the imminent danger of choking her.

Gladys, softened by this great concession upon independent Miss Vera's part: "I was baddest. I am sorry, too, some, but I'll get more sorrier when I go to bed, 'cause then the lumps come up in me, and when they get to my throat they stick awful and I can't get them up or down. It hurts me dreadfully to be bad; don't it you, Vera?"

"Not much," the mischief replied.

"But I don't see what makes the lumps?" asked Vera, meditatively.

"Why, the naughty in me rolls up together in a bunch and keeps rolling and rolling until it gets hard like balls, and comes up in my throat and wants to get out, and God won't let it, I 'spect," explained Gladys, whose brilliant mind always had some philosophical or original answer.

The mothers in the adjoining room found this explanation more than their risibilities could withstand, so they hastily sped down stairs, Mrs. True-man remarking that she understood perfectly how both children felt, for sometimes she "was dreadful sorry and hurt awfully," like Gladys. At other times it did not strike in much deeper than Vera's repentance.

"I think your idea about the box is excellent, and I am going home to see if I can inspire the children to send the little heathen girls any black-eyed Susans or a box to your what do you call it?"

"The Children's Settlement,' which is a resort for the poorest waifs in the city. Noble is a great



friend of the superintendent, who is a hero in his eyes, gives up his entire life to the work. They say it is remarkable what that one man is doing for the elevation of that neighborhood."

"That certainly appeals to me, and I will try to enthuse the children; but I often think if their father cared more for such things, they might. But how can I do much when he sneers right before them?"

Katherine felt a great compassion for this little woman who had the entire burden of training the children resting upon her frail shoulders. Her own happy marriage had not made her selfish. She said encouragingly: "I would talk to the children alone and see if they will enter into it. Allow them to do as much of the packing of the box as possible, even if you have to take it all out when they are asleep. I often do that, but it pays, for their enjoyment is so keen and they imbibe the spirit of helpfulness. Mamma used to say almost any child liked to help if appealed to in the right way. I venture to say it will change the tone of their Christmas if you keep them busy working for the less fortunate ones."

"I will certainly try it and report," Mrs. Thomas replied, more cheerfully, as she departed.

"I wish I could be like mamma; give something bright or helpful to every one I meet—but my baby!"

The young mother tripped up stairs and peeped into her room. She went softly to a dainty crib, curtained in white, within which with wide open



eyes lay the household pet just awakened from her nap, and in that delicious semi-conscious state almost lingering on the borderland of Heaven.

Mrs. Trueman stood looking down a moment in admiration.

And while she is thus absorbed in her motherhood, we can but contrast her with the fiery high strung girl of only ten years previous.

Wedded to one whose temperament accorded with her own, the development had been natural and beautiful.

But the blue eyes soon spied mamma, and then the cooing and chatting that ensued.

Katherine seated herself in the rocker, and with the baby nestling in her arms sang in her sweet voice—which had developed a richness of expression with her deeper happiness—

“No rubies of red for my lady,  
No jewel that glitters and charms,  
But the light of the skies in a little one’s eyes,  
And a necklace of two little arms.

“Of two little arms that are clinging,  
Oh, ne’er was a necklace like this!  
And the wealth of the world and love’s sweetness  
impearled  
In the joy of a little one’s kiss.

“A necklace of love for my lady  
That was linked by the angels above,  
No other than this—and the tender sweet kiss  
That sealeth a little one’s love.”



One could but wish that all the little ones in the world could share such tenderness; but alas! in too many homes "a perfect love of a poodle," "a darling little pug," are shown far more consideration and devotion than these priceless jewels—the children.

Nurse girls of even questionable character take care of the little ones while mamma goes out driving with her "dear darling" four-legged divinity.

A shame and disgrace to womanhood that such facts exist.

Crowd the children out! "No room for them in the inn," is quite as true of childhood to-day as when the Christ child was refused a lodgment.

Crowd them out! Lavish your tenderness upon "a love of dog," fair lady. The love that God implanted for nobler uses.

No time to guide little feet into truth's ways; no time to fold the tiny hands in prayer and teach the little one to revere the One whose help he will need in all his life problems.

Certainly not! There is the latest novel to read and Madam Upton's grand party is coming off. A dress which will dazzle and make the rest of womankind in your circle turn the proverbial green, consumes much time in preparation. But then, some of the gentlemen will admire you. "How superb Mrs. Wyman looks in her new brocade!"

Even if your husband fails to appreciate you and sighs for the good old days when you were happy to spend every evening of the week with



him, what inexpressible comfort it will be to shine for one brief evening at Mrs. Upton's, and then console yourself next day with your "dear darling doggie," who is so sympathetic and fond of you, while children and husband are thoughtlessly cruel of your feelings.

We rejoice that this is true only of a comparatively small part of enlightened womanhood. But the situation is grave enough to warrant our thoughtful attention.

In the name of all nobleness that lies dormant in every woman's being, rend the chains which bind you to senseless vapid living, and take your place in the world as a wholesome, symmetrical woman!

"For 'tis for this sublime end, thy God hath lent thee life."



## CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh, there's Winfield, Erva, Uncle Phil and Auntie Bernice!" screamed the children, as they rushed from the window where they had been intently watching for the desired event, for what seemed to them an endless period of time.

Down stairs they were reinforced by mamma, whose eyes shone like stars, so eager was she to see her dear big brother, the playmate and closest friend of her childhood.

Phil, now a heavily mustached man of thirty-two, bore in his arms a child whose eyes were dark and brilliant as his own.

He almost deposited his precious bundle upside down in the rush to greet his sister.

The same boyish roguery shone in his face as he gathered her in his arms and administered quite as ardent a squeezing as in the old days.

Vera and Gladys danced about the picture of animated delight, trying to unwrap the little cousin whom they had never seen, and stopping to kiss Uncle Phil between the acts.

Altogether it was one of those happy meetings which defy description.

Every body talked at once and many were the attempts to remove the numerous outer garments ere it was finally accomplished. So much to tell



and two new treasures to be looked at, Baby Eleanor and little Erva.

"What a contrast!" exclaimed the delighted Kate, rescuing Erva from the children and placing her upon Phil's other knee beside Eleanor.

Perhaps never were two children more unlike, and they seemed to show each other off to the best advantage. Eleanor, with those lovely violet eyes, long dark lashes and such a sunny little face. Erva possessing a pair of wonderful dark eyes, contrasting strangely with the pure golden color of her curls. Something so spirituale about her, one could but think of those little ones who come to earth to tarry but a brief time, and never lose sight of the shore from whence they have wandered.

Katherine took her in her arms. "She is radiant looking in health," she said, admiring the rounded arms and shapely form, "but is she well, Phil?"

"Why, certainly, Kate. Never sick a day in her life. What makes you ask that?" he said, as a shadow crossed his happy face.

"Because she looks so—well, so—angelic."

"She is!" he responded, with a look of perfect devotion toward the little one. "I sometimes wish she was a trifle more wicked like my pet, Vera," he said, pulling the small girl's hair teasingly.

"Really, Kate, I don't see how I came to be the father of two such good ones. Winfield never did half the bad things during the six years of his life that we used to do in a week."

"I am delighted to think yours have turned out



such models, for mine are"—she made a droll face—"well, those two are equal to us any of our very worst days. Vera is a very duplicate of Brace. My hopes revive. Possibly your little angels may have a wholesome effect upon my sinners. I don't see how mamma escaped being gray at thirty, for I am sure I will be faded out when I reach her present age."

Eleanor, still retaining her seat upon Uncle Phil's knee, was smiling up at him irresistibly.

"Say! you're a darling!" Uncle Phil tossed her high in the air.

"She don't look like either of you, Kate."

"Yes, she has Noble's forehead and complexion," said Auntie Bernice, as she claimed the dear baby awhile.

"Come to auntie," said a voice of such winning persuasion, that Eleanor nestled at once in her arms, looking at her thoughtfully the while, and well she might, for there was not only beauty, but a depth and sweetness depicted in the face that bent over her.

We are all glad to catch a glimpse of Phil's queen, which life with its changing circumstances had at last brought to him. But we must defer description, for Noble has come in with a springing step.

How delightful was this reunion of old chums.

"Well! well! well!" exclaimed Noble. "How are you, any way, old fellow?"

The two robust men nearly dislocated each other's hands from their proper members, they put



their arms on each other's shoulders and gave vent to their pleasure by an occasional slap on the back.

Katherine had disappeared and soon a silver chime announced the dinner hour.

The children were wild with joy over having two little cousins to share their Christmas tree and joys.

At a word from papa, however, the voices were hushed and hands folded, although it is extremely doubtful that the small heads managed to keep bowed during the blessing, for how could they help stealing glances at the beautiful little cousin across the table and the manly little fellow opposite Vera promised to be a splendid playfellow. She would always rather play with boys than girls, this little tomboy of the family.

Gladys loved fun and excitement quite as much as her sister, and had spells of being in wild spirits, but hers was a deeper nature, and her love of books somewhat toned down her buoyancy.

Just now she charmed Aunt Bernice, who admired this niece exceedingly, seeing in her elements of future greatness, at least so it appeared to her fond auntie's eyes.

"She is certainly an exceptional child, Katherine," Mrs. Phil found opportunity to say in a whisper.

"I am pleased that you think so, for I feel it, but Noble says that is because I am her mother."

"I am convinced of its truth every time I see her," Mrs. Phil responded.



Dinner over, Noble and Phil were deep in a political discussion, and the children all talking at once, so the sisters, for the tie between them was a most sweet one, had a much coveted chat before their matronly duties for the night began.

As it is evidently a confidential one, we will not intrude, but remain in the cozy room where the children are already acquainted and speculating what Santa will bring.

Vera, the generous, is wishing with all her fervent little heart that "Santa will put heaps and heaps of presents in every poor child's stocking.

"I am sure he will put some in, 'cause we helped him, Gladys, Eleanor and me."

"We did, too," said Winfield, his fine face lighting up. "Me'n, mamma, and sister, went down to the 'Empty Stocking Club' and filled some all ourselves, to be sure Santa didn't forget, 'cause he had such a big mind full of people to 'member he might forget some."

"You're a splendid fellow!" exclaimed Vera, "and not a speck selfish like George. He never wants to give anybody a pin. I 'spose it would pierce his soul to do so."

"Vera!" reproved papa, as he caught the last remark.

"Papa Trueman! You said that yourself."

Phil was trying to dodge behind a newspaper.

"When did I say such a thing?"

"You said it ever so long ago about George's father, that it would pierce his soul if he gave a



cent away, and I am sure if it would do that to him, it would to George, for he's the stingiest—"

"Hush, daughter," Noble replied, but feeling himself decidedly vanquished.

When the children were again absorbed in play, Noble turned to Phil. "That shows we have to walk chalk before these youngsters, for they form their judgment by everything we let slip. I made a hasty remark one day which I regretted the next moment; but that child did not forget it, and is judging her playmate by the standard that I set up. You may laugh, Phil, but I see the serious side of it, and it comes to me often, that my sentiments are going to color and shape, to a great extent, their future.

"You were always a Noble boy," Phil returned, with a half serious look struggling with the fun. "I never was good like you, and I am afraid our babies would be totally depraved if it wasn't for their mother."

A reverent look came over Phil's face, and it was evident that all his manhood bowed to the gracious woman he had enthroned in his heart.

"Come on, Winfield!" Vera grasped her cousin's hand and they scampered up stairs, Gladys following with little Erva, to whom she was much attached.

Eleanor nestled in her father's arms and was soon fast asleep, worn out with excitement.

Up stairs riot was raging when the mothers appeared with gowns in hand.



How the small people pleaded to stay up just a little longer.

"Mamma, I'm having the bestest time!" shouted Winfield, from the top of a high bed where Vera had insisted upon his perching, as a sailor boy clinging to the mast, while she made the springs go in imitation of the waves.

"Oh, do let us stay up, mamma," begged Gladys; but the mothers were inexorable, so the children consoled themselves by hanging up their stockings and scampering to bed.

But it is quite certain, had their mothers not been otherwise interested, they would have heard many a laugh and story proceeding from the white beds.

Gladys was in her gayest mood, and for fear Erva might feel strange and cry for mamma, was regaling her and the others, with marvelous stories she had read, which she colored to suit her own fertile imagination.

Erva lay contentedly upon her arm, looking at her with earnest thoughtfulness, as if pondering every word, until at last the lashes drooped lower and lower and she was fast asleep.

But Gladys remained awake a long time after the rest, watching the firelight make shadows upon the walls and thinking her 'long, long thoughts.'

"I wonder when God was a little baby like Jesus? Jesus was a wee baby ever so long ago. He was born a night like this," looking out at the sky twinkling with points of light.

"There's the star, too, that the wise men saw.



I wonder how God looked when he was a baby, because He must have been. Papa said God was always just God, big, great God; but I don't believe it, for every body was little some time, mamma said, 'cept Adam and Eve. God was Jesus' papa, but nobody ever will tell me who was God? Papa says nobody knows." Gladys sat up and looked very thoughtfully out into the night.

"I suppose now Jesus is born, we must be good and love to get our Sunday school lessons. Mamma said he was born to help us not slap each other. I hope he'll get around to me before long, 'cause I don't like to be lumpy inside. God has so many to 'tend to He can't help them all at once; but I hope my turn will come—" and the expressive little face dropped back upon the pillow, the dreamy blue eyes were soon closed in slumber.

Innocent childhood! Who can linger in your presence and not feel purer?

So felt the happy mothers as they tiptoed about filling the little stockings. Then tucking in the little sleepers with love's own tender touch, they sped away for a good-night girlish chat.



## CHAPTER IX.

The holidays flew by most joyously.

Noble and Phil had many talks of college days, present events, and future hopes.

Noble had introduced Phil to his honored friend, Mr. Kingsley, and the contact was mutually helpful, Phil gaining an outlook into conditions of city life so very opposite to those he met with in his pleasant home town.

Phil was now a physician of rising fame.

"I do not wonder you take life more seriously, Noble, for since you have shown me some of the suffering and blots upon the fair city, it makes me disheartened. I am thankful I am out of it. I want a purer atmosphere."

"Yes, so do I, but if the clean men leave it to the rabble, is that discharging the highest duties of citizenship?"

"Certainly not, but evil seems to rule the courts of justice, ride supreme over the efforts of true men, and put into power whomsoever it will."

"It does indeed to an extent truly alarming, because pure men fear contamination, shirk the issue, and leave it to the lawless element. Still, there are forces at work underneath all this seeming supremacy of the vicious, that make for the



betterment of society. Forces, Mr. Kingsley would say, that will eventually lift us out of the mire."

Phil looked very sober. "Since I came to the city I confess myself no longer an optimist."

"The city is full of labor  
And struggle and strife and care;  
The fever pulse of the city  
Is throbbing in all the air;

But calm through the sunlit spaces,  
And calm through the starlit sky,  
Forever over the city  
The clouds of God go by."

Repeated with beautiful intonations a sweet voice, as Bernice leaned above her husband's chair and tenderly stroked his hair.

"Your presence is most opportune, Bernice, for I was fast being lost in a perplexity of doubt and despair. Your words are beautiful. Where did you get them?"

"They are from a song I heard when in Boston, rendered by a fine baritone soloist, and they have seemed like a gospel of hope to me ever since."

"O Uncle Phil! Here's the cutest little kitten you ever saw, and it needs a doctor right away to open its blind eyes and let the oppressed go free."

Vera sprang to Uncle Phil's knee, holding up a most miserable specimen of the feline tribe.

"Where did you get so much scripture, Vera?"



You surely were never still long enough to learn whole chapters like we use to when sent to Lady Silver Lock's room for reformation."

"Oh, I just catch it in church while listening to the preacher, and it runs down my hair to the roots, so it has to drop right into my brain, and there it sticks."

Phil set her down and walked to the window to hide his amusement, just as a terrific roar came from the upper regions.

"I judge that one of our early episodes is being re-enacted, Katherine," said Phil, as he followed her in the direction of the ominous sounds. Another deafening noise quickened their steps.

They were met on the landing by Gladys, whose attitude convinced them that she was the author of the mischief.

"What on earth are you doing, Gladys?" asked mamma.

"That's it, we are playing earthquake, the kind like you read about in the paper, and when that was over I said, 'Let's have another and call it the last day,'" added the child solemnly.

"But what did you do make it?" questioned mamma, in dismay.

"We just rolled Eleanor's little crib in through the hall where it would sound loud, and then pushed



VERA



it back and forth as hard as we could. That was the thunder. Then we run the express wagon to make it louder. Then we both screamed as hard as we could, for the houses were going to fall on us, like they do in a truly quake, and we were just going to be swallowed up in the ground, down in the shoot to the basement when you came and spoiled it all."

"Kate, it's in the blood. They can't help it. Remember our early pranks and have patience with their youthful enthusiasm," laughed Phil.

"Gladys, take that crib right back in my room and fix everything up as nicely as you found it," said mamma, quite sternly.

"Dadis me help 'ou," cooed baby Erva, trotting after her admirer and pushing the crib with all her baby might.

Katherine looked doleful for a moment. "I don't see why I am not more of a success in governing."

"Now, see here, sis," consoled Phil, who could not bear to see his companion of other days disheartened, "you are doing your level best to bring them up right—here, Bernice! thou ever welcome, I'll resign my position of comforter to the despondent, in your favor, knowing that in no better hands could I leave my patient." He waved them a merry adieu.

"Why are not my children dutiful like yours? I do my best to bring them up as mamma did us, and Noble is the best helper on earth, yet such a shocking set, except this little flower of mine,"



taking Eleanor in her arms and holding her so close that baby murmured, "Pitty tight, mamma."

"Excuse me, dear; mamma did not mean to smother you with love."

"Certainly," lisped the baby lips.

"You need not grieve at all, Katherine, for I never knew a more sincere mother. I consider your hold upon them wonderful. You do not have to tell them 'No' over and over. I saw your merry Vera sober down very quickly the other day when you merely said, 'No.'"

"But I have to keep everlastingly at it. I may not have to say no about that one thing, but there is always a next coming up, until I get distracted."

"Of course you do. Your nerves are on a strain and you live so intensely with them. Shall I tell you how I keep poised when I feel like flying to pieces?"

"Do, pass on your remedy."

"I have several in reserve, and if one fails I try another. If I can go away entirely from the children for a few moments and drop everything I become hushed in spirit; but if that is impossible, I look at the trees outlined so beautifully against the sky, and I watch the clouds and let my soul sail away in the azure, and sending my thoughts out into the vastness, I seem to lose the fret. Things which have vexed me drop away and I regain control over throbbing nerves. Then, if I am chained to one spot, I look at a grand picture Phil recently purchased for our room. It always gives me an uplift. So cannot you look away



from the turmoil of your nursery to the blue of heaven, and feel that over and around you, to help in your perplexities, is a great Peace, ready to enfold you if the pressure of the moment is let go.?"

"Bernice, you are like mamma in your inner nature, so strong and fine."

"Thank you, Katherine. I would rather be like Mother Worthington than any one I know; but I realize I am a long, long way off from her height."

"Love, I'se so tired; I walk to much I'se so tired," baby Erva said, as she climbed into her mother's arms and nestled in her sweet resting place.

"Does she often call you 'Love?'" asked Kate, stroking the golden curls admiringly.

"Yes, it is her favorite name for me. I suppose she has heard her papa say it so often." Bernice's eyes shone with a happy light.

How beautiful are these simple home pictures of pure love. How sweet to witness the joy of these who prized their crown of motherhood and wore it so regally.

Radiant spots are such homes, keeping alive the beautiful faith that love is immortal, and that in spite of earth's sorrow, there is such satisfaction. And for those who have missed life's holiest joys: "It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the things God hath prepared for them that love Him." It is all laid up—Love's highest crown and deepest joy; thus it is really true and we may press onward knowing: *It is better farther on.*



## CHAPTER X.

“A babe in the house is a well-spring of pleasure,  
A messenger of peace and love,  
A resting place for innocence on earth,  
A link between angels and men.”

Mr. Kingsley dropped the book he had taken for a moment's inspiration.

“That is what God meant children in the home to be,” he mused, “but how far from His conception are we fallen.”

He put on his overcoat mechanically, thinking of the unwelcome little ones who were anything but “well springs of pleasure.” Children, some of whom were capable of high attainments, but whose environments were of the worst type. “Yet character is growing day by day and all things aid in its unfolding.”

Time and even life itself he had laid down upon the crucifix of self-denial, that this center might radiate greater light into these wretched hovels called homes. Yet often this noble man found himself without helpers and fully one hundred children gathered from the streets to care for.

“Surely God is behind all this,” he would say in moments of discouragement, and planting his feet upon this faith, he fought his way through difficulties that often seemed insurmountable.



Today he went to a wretched place. His knock was answered by a bright boy who ushered him into a room presenting a decided contrast to the outward surroundings.

It seemed alive with children, and was, to be sure, far from orderly; but the air of refinement was evident from the few pictures that graced the walls, remnants of happier and more fortunate days.

"It's Brother!" exclaimed a chorus of delighted voices, and they scrambled to get nearer their friend.

"Brother! brother!" was heard on all sides, showing that a bond most sweet existed between this rather stern looking man and these children.

"How are you all to-day?" he asked cheerily. "You, Ruthy, and my little Esther?" catching the youngest in his arms.

"I'se all wite, brother," baby Esther cuddled up closer in the kind sheltering arms, "but my mamma, her so tick."

"It makes me hurt, brother," said sober little Ruth, laying her tired head on brother's arm.

"What makes you hurt, dear?"

"Tause my mamma is so sick," Ruth responded, looking so heavy hearted for so wee a maiden that it made this good Samaritan's heart ache.

"Charlie," called a sweet voice, "bring Brother in to see me a minute."

"Ah, our good friend, how are you to-day?"

"How am I? Well! well! Really I am surprised that any one should think to inquire about me.



Fact is, I never stop to think how I am. I just go on."

"You are a brave man, and because I have found you so true, I want you to promise me something."

"Certainly, it is my pleasure to do all I can for you, Mrs. Coleburn."

A luminous look came in her eyes as she replied: "I am going on a long, long journey one of these days, and the trip looks very beautiful to me now, although it brings me keen anguish. I would like to tell you of it, if I am not intruding too much upon your time?"

"Indeed you are not. I am much interested. It will do me good and I am a most willing listener."

"Yesterday, as I lay here alone a few moments, I felt so rebellious over our condition, the loss of the children's father, and their being in this awful neighborhood, where they can but learn evil, and I so young, lying here unable to care for them. O it was bitter! 'I did not feel good inside,' as little Ruthy says. I wanted to get well so badly, it seemed as if I must! I felt as if I had to see God and talk it out with Him and know why these things must be. In that tempestuous state I dropped asleep and awakened hushed in soul. I was so quiet 'twas almost as though I ceased to breathe. Then I thought my bed was a boat and I was upon the ocean. The waves were boisterous at first, but gradually they became more tranquil. I thought myself alone on quite a large vessel and that we went by a very zig zag course; but after



a time I discovered a captain of quiet but noble bearing was in charge. All sense of insecurity left me. I just sank back and enjoyed it so much, and presently a great flash of radiance streamed out, touching the rippling water with light as from a million diamonds. I was in rapture, and leaned forward to see whence came the flood of glory, when I saw in the distance a city more beautiful than words can portray! Such dazzling light radiated from every point and turret. I caught my breath in very ecstasy, while my guide, the noble captain, said to me: "You see it has been a very winding course, but we are nearing port at last. Behold the lights of Home!"

She sank among the pillows, a great peace in her face, while her eyes seemed to have caught the fadeless glory and retained its luster.

"Dear, kind friend, our brother, you have led me back to the 'Elder Brother,' and I am sure it is in His place you were sent us. Now, I want you to promise to take charge of my babies when I take my seat in the boat. I know I am already in it, brother, and the course may be zig zag, but it is not so very long."

Mr. Kingsley took the thin hand held out to him. "It is a great trust. I am unable to care for them myself, but I will do my best, and when I step into the boat I hope to feel that I have fulfilled your desire."

Mr. Kingsley left the sweet-faced invalid with a heavy heart, for one of his favorite families was thus to be left desolate.



"I will not leave you orphans," came like a voice of cheer, as he wended his way to the next place.

From a broken window pane was removed a bundle of rags and a head thrust out. "And who in the name of sinse be you?" asked a coarse voice, "And what is it you're wantin' here?"

Was it a woman's face? It was difficult to distinguish, so utterly groveling had it become. Beastly seemed best to typify its dull outline, while real evil looked forth from the eye.

"So it's you, be it?" A growl almost doglike admitted him.

Mr. Kingsley did not offer to sit, if indeed he could have found a suitable place, but stood hat in hand.

"I came to speak to you about Marion. I have found a very nice place where she can work for her board and go to school. She ought to be in school, you know."

"What you say? You want to take my gal away to work for her board and go to school? Well, not while I've got this arm to fight ye. I tell ye I'll have none of it! I expect to make money out of that gal fore long and you'd cut off a poor woman's income! Out with ye! D'ye hear? If you don't git right out I'll put ye where you'll wish ye had!"

The very fiend himself looked forth from her eyes.

Mr. Kingsley did not retreat an inch.

"I came here to say that if you undertake to make money out of that child's virtue, there will



be trouble, and you will run up against something more formidable than myself, namely, the law!"

"And it's you as will insult a decent woman in her own house, be it? Well, you're a thin one all right, and 'twon't take much to lay you out," advancing toward him with her brawny arm uplifted.

"You're in great business comin' here to larn me what to do with my gal. I'll give you something you won't forgit in a hurry."

The fury in her face deepened as she drew a knife out of her bosom.

Kingsley, being very quick motioned and perfectly fearless, moved out of her way, pausing to say: "Madam, I have warned you and the threat will be executed to the letter."

The demon, for womanhood had long vanished, rushed at him, but being of unwieldy bulk,, she stumbled and fell headlong, just as her intended victim passed to the somewhat purer air of the street.

"Marion shall be saved if it be in human power!" he said in a determined tone. "I would gladly lay down my life to shield her or any pure child from such a creature."

Onward went this pilgrim until he overtook a group of ragged urchins. "Brother! brother!" they shouted. "Can't we go to the club?" "Not yet, Joe. I must visit some little sick people first." The children fell back disappointedly.

"Character is mainly molded by the cast of



minds that surround it," Kingsley quoted, "And what chance for these in this atmosphere?"

He looked down upon the sinned against children about him, and his heart swelled with compassion.

"Come around at four o'clock, Joe, and I will be there. It should be open as an offset to these numerous 'Family Entrances.'"



## CHAPTER XI.

“Frail art thou, O man, as a bubble on the breaker,  
Weak and governed by externals like a poor bird caught  
in a storm.  
Yet thy momentary breath may still the raging waters;  
Thy hand can touch a lever that will move the world.”

We left Mr. Alexander much moved by the spiritual uplift of one of those radiant types of manhood.

However, the pride of his social position prevented him from yielding to these higher leadings and he plunged more deeply than ever into business life.

The tossing waves were hurrying him onward with such frightful rapidity, that he sometimes felt as though he was being drawn into a terrible vortex. As a rest, he stole away from his cares to his one solace, his daughter, who was unfolding her life petals with the rose's first blush and freshness upon them.

Lora Alexander partook largely of her father's strong character, and was endowed with the grace and charm of her mother, who was the star of every social event and an acknowledged society leader.

Left alone a great deal, Lora had become thoughtful and often astonished her mother by her deep remarks.



Mrs. Alexander had one of those pleasant dispositions which was on good terms with the world about her. It flattered and wooed her, why should she not be good-natured with it?

She valued her beauty far too highly to wear it out by ill temper. So while she was engrossed with society, her children were left to the care of servants.

Fortunately in Lora's childhood a superior young woman had been secured as governess, and she had remained through ten years of the girl's life and been her moral preservation, as well as in a measure supplying a mother's place to the otherwise lonely child.

This occurring during the formative period, had been a most happy providence.

But less fortunate had the younger children been. Ned, left entirely to the care of many different people, was now the cause of grave solicitude on the part of his father. Thad, a promising boy of six, had likewise been entrusted to a succession of nurses of various hues and nationalities, few of whom possessed any principle.

But when little Thad made his advent, Lora was ten, and as she matured became more and more a helpful influence in the child's life, and in a measure, her pure character and good sense, acted as a corrective force to the unlimited indulgence he received at the hands of the household.

Because of this, his father entertained strong hopes that his young son would escape some of the pitfalls into which his eldest had already fallen.



"Such a darling as Thad is," Lora said one evening, while sitting with her father. "But I just rack my brains to think what to do with him. Mamma says he is all right, but I feel he will be spoiled if I do not make him mind. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, indeed, my Sweet. My only hope lies in your influence. He is capable of so much and you must bring it out."

"He is the brightest boy I ever saw, papa, but it seems as though every one spoils him faster than I can help. Still he loves and listens to me a good deal. Muriel has helped me so much. She never talks goody, but she lives just like a flower, and is so lovely to her little brother. Papa, what makes their home so different from ours?"

Mr. Alexander's face saddened. "O Lora! dear daughter, don't!"

Lora noticed a pained expression on her father's face that she had never seen before. Almost a convulsive sob shook the powerfully built man, but he mastered it in a moment.

"Papa! papa! what was it hurt you?" Lora threw her arms around his neck.

"There! my child; I am all right, only a little tired to-night. I had a hard day, but you rest me so much. Now smile again, little girl. I should think our home is different from Mr. Robbins," said Mr. Alexander, trying to speak lightly and divert Lora from too penetrating thoughts. "Ours is considered a mansion, while theirs is but an ordinary, though pretty home."



"Oh, it isn't the house, papa, but such a nice feeling about the place. I love to go there. It seems so like a home."

Mr. Alexander sighed and the troubled look returned. He had learned to battle with his own heart loneliness, and was usually its master; but when he read the heart hunger of his precious child, and knew that his boys were missing the priceless training these others were receiving, it was a sword's thrust. Yet, so loyal was he to the woman he had led to the altar, that he never had in action or word revealed this feeling to his most intimate friends.

He had married Marie for her beauty and soon learned that the admiration of one loyal heart was insufficient to satisfy the vanity of her soul. But he escorted her to social functions, treated her with every mark of courtesy, and surrounded her with all that she desired. Thus they lived on pleasantly, with few jars; but alas! with few heart throbs answering to heart and love's highest communion, how sadly wanting.

Yet Mrs. Alexander was not a bad woman at heart, but simply too engrossed with this world and the things thereof, to give much attention to nearer, dearer claims. She did not realize that, like the small but constant creeping of the silent footsteps of the sea, the wall of adamant is undermined and its ruin stealthily accomplished; or that little by little the world, with its dazzle and shine, was silently bearing her away from her dear possessions.



Mr. Alexander had been faithful in the least, as well as in the greatest of his marriage vows; but the pang that smote him so keenly and nearly mastered the strong man, was due not only to the sorrow he felt for his children, but because swiftly before his mind arose a picture of a true womanly face. For a moment it held him. He could not withstand those eyes, and his soul bowed down with reverence ere he was aware. The anguish was fierce, but, happily, for Lora's sake, of short duration. "Good night, dear," he said a little later, as he kissed her fair forehead.

Escaping to his own apartments he sank into his great leather chair in front of the glowing fire and abandoned himself to the emotion he had quelled for the time. Now it would have its way and the same face loomed up in the firelight.

He could endure it no longer.

"I must not see it, I must not think, or my brain will reel!" Back and forth, back and forth he paced, no longer able to bear inaction.

One voice came to his ears, one presence alone seemed to pervade his very being. "*I must, I shall* be loyal in thought as well as outward action," was his agonizing mental cry, "but O God! God! God!"

The strong man went down before the long pent grief of a starving heart.

A loud noise as of a heavy falling body brought the servants and Lora to the room, where lay the master of the house in a state of unconsciousness.



Lora, whose intense love for her father amounted to worship, alone was cool enough to control the excited servants. She ordered them to place him upon the bed and bring a physician, "one or a dozen." She loosened his clothing and applied all the restoratives her limited experience enabled her to, and after the doctor's arrival could not be persuaded to leave her father through the long hours that followed.

Mrs. Alexander was at Mrs. Grandalee's ball, and coming home in the early morning was amazed to see her home ablaze with lights, while excited servants were flitting too and fro.

"What is it?" she asked hysterically.

And upon being informed, let it be placed to her credit, that a genuine pang struck her heart.

She threw aside her wraps and went straight to her husband's bedside, in all the brilliancy of her ballroom attire. Lora, doctor, and nurse, were looking anxious, for Mr. Alexander had not regained consciousness.

"Hush!" said the doctor, somewhat sternly, "You cannot come here."

"Cannot see my husband?" said Mrs. Alexander, unused to being commanded. "Well, I will!" She leaned over his pillow and placed her fair hand flashing with jewels upon his forehead. "Alex," she softly whispered.

"I tell you, Mrs. Alexander, it is unwise to arouse him," said the doctor, coldly.

She stepped back and stood a little distance, toying with a flower she held. She half smiled as



she looked down at it, for her nature was so unaccustomed to pain she would not admit the situation to be grave until forced to.

Presently Mr. Alexander opened his eyes, and the first object he saw was Marie, in all her beauty and glittering robes. For an instant he smiled at her admiringly, then a swift look of pain ensued, succeeded by a spasm of anguish.

"O Marie! Marie!" he called in a troubled way, "You are so very beautiful, but too bright; you—you hurt me."

"Go!" commanded the doctor, and Mrs. Alexander went swiftly from the room.

Mr. Alexander sighed so profoundly that the good doctor shook his head. "Mental trouble," he thought, but wisely kept it to himself.

Mrs. Alexander felt a strange feeling tugging at her usually light heart. Why did she suddenly revert to the night of her betrothal, and seem to see herself and "Alex the Conqueror," as she had playfully called him, standing again in the moonlight?

"My Alexander the Great," she had named him, and he had been that to her all these years.

She still looked up to, and loved him all that her shallow nature was capable of doing.

"O Alex!" she thought remorsefully, "I am afraid I have neglected you." So, leaving her chastened thoughts, we pause a moment in the sick room. Lora, white and wan with her all night vigil, was questioning the doctor.





MRS. ALEXANDER



"The danger is past," my child. He only needs sleep and nothing to excite him. A day or so in the hands of this good nurse will fix him up all right."

Lora went to her room. It had seemed as though the night would never end. "My father! my father!" The brave girl gave way at last to a flood of tears. "He isn't happy, and I know it."

Had Mr. Alexander been conscious that his secret pain was even partly divined by this treasured child, it would have wrung his heart afresh, for he desired to shield her from every rough wind. "No blight shall touch my flower while I can prevent it," was his frequent thought.

The doctor was right. Rest restored the tired nerves and the lives of the household went on in the same old way, except a keen observer might have noted a deeper interest in Mrs. Alexander's tones as she inquired after her husband's health, for she had not entirely forgotten the shock. But her light nature could not brood and the world with its old allurements soon held again first place in her time and the thought.

But Lora could not forget the revelation that had come to her on that terrible night, and was doubly solicitous of her father's comfort.

Sometimes she almost forgot the shadow, for he seemed happy with her, as indeed he was, for her pure love was like a guardian spirit hovering over him, and had ever been since her sweet life began.

A Study in Life Tints! Truly it is. Here a



glimpse of a strong man's pain, there a peep at a shallow nature ; again a flood of light strikes across the cloudy outlines of a life, gilding it with glory ineffable. Then the monotonous, apparently never ending prose of life, when the dull pages weary us and we beckon on events impatiently, heedless of the fact that their coming may bring sorrow as well as joy, and change perchance the entire current of our lives.



## CHAPTER XII.

A cozy little room on the fifth floor of a second-class rooming house. Cozy, because in it was a cheerful fire and two lively girls. A merry conversation was ensuing as they flitted about arranging little articles of feminine apparel and emptying a small trunk which stood in the middle of the room.

"Oh, isn't it splendid!" exclaimed Elsie. "I am glad, gladder, gladdest that we came!"

"I should say!" replied Nelle, enthusiastically. "We've enjoyed life more during these three days than in all our lives before, shut up in that stupid little town. I really pity the people who have to stay there all of their days and never see anything of this big world."

Nelle paused a moment to survey the room.

"I am going to put the trunk here in the corner and drape something over it; make a cozy corner of it, don't you see?"

"You are a jewel, Nelle. You have resources and a very artistic eye. I believe you could transform a desert place into a rose garden."

"I can't spare any quarters, so don't be too lavish with your compliments, please. I am going to put this little picture up here and you put your mother's there. Now, don't that look all right?"



Nelle stepped back and looked at her work critically. "It looks just splendid!" admired Elsie.

"Won't we have fun housekeeping?" said practical Nelle.

Elsie was in gay spirits over her first peep into the great world, and easily dazzled by its splendors.

"I have been embracing myself all day to think we did it."

"Did what?" queried Nelle.

"Came, of course. I cannot think of anything else, can you?"

"Hardly, but I have a little about that lady at the depot who was so nice to us. I mean the nicely dressed woman all in black who spoke to us first and wanted us to go with her."

"She was very ladylike and it was kind of her to be interested in strangers. I wonder why she left us so suddenly when the depot matron came to us?" Elsie answered.

"I wonder, too. Perhaps if we had gone with her we would have found a nicer place; but then this is cozy and cheap."

So they prattled gaily on, fortunately shadowed little as yet by the cares of life. Happy girlhood! Who would not shield you from life's sorrows as long as possible. Oh, that the manhood of the city were purer, and the womanhood truer, to help protect your innocence.

After a sound sleep, from which they awakened rosy and refreshed, they regaled themselves with the remains of yesterday's lunch and started forth like two lambs to find a niche in the bustling city



where they could earn enough to supply their simple wants.

From one employment bureau to another they went, always finding so many applicants ahead of them that their case seemed hopeless. Next they tried the department stores without success. At last, just as they were returning home, footsore and weary, Elsie was fortunate enough to win the favor of the head man of the Wright Bros., manufacturers of rubber goods.

Elsie's rosy cheeks, bright eyes, and vivacious manner, had certainly proved attractive, and she was elated over securing a position which would bring her five dollars per week with chance of promotion.

Nelle's spirits were evidently drooping.

"Never mind, Nelle dear," said warm-hearted Elsie, putting her arm within that of her friend's, "I will be promoted soon and then we'll be all right."

Nelle brightened. "Oh, well, I didn't expect to get something right away. I am glad one of us has work."

Very hopeful and happy they were, as they wended their way through the crowded thoroughfare, pausing now and then to gaze at the fascinating windows. And later, while they cooked their evening meal, how their tongues ran on about the wonders of the great city.

"You must write to your mother this very night, Elsie," said Nelle, who, although younger, was by far the more thoughtful of the two."



"That's so! I have so much to tell I don't know where to begin."

Leaving Elsie to her home letter, Nelle seated herself upon the trunk, there being but one chair, which they laughingly agreed to take turns using. She was soon lost in a book that her teacher had given her when they parted. It was entitled, "Through the Dark to the Day," and was written by a woman who had lived deeply herself ere she sought to guide and inspire others.

Nelle's teacher had watched the girls depart with many misgivings. "Elsie is so impulsive, and Nelle so sweet and trustful, I hope they will fall into good hands. It is hard to let them go off alone, not knowing where to go."

She had selected this book for Nelle, hoping it would appeal so strongly to her heart, that in some dark hour, or crisis in her life, it might tide her over and lead her into the day.

Reading amounted to a passion with Nelle, and most of the literature she had come in contact with had been of a wholesome tone, so she had sipped little or no poison.

Day after day passed and still Nelle found no work. This was a serious drain upon their reserve fund. But at the end of the fourteenth day she obtained a temporary place to do piece work. It all depended upon her speed. If she became very skilful she might earn three-fifty to four dollars per week.

They had been obliged to cut down their table expenses and Nelle had often gone from early in



the morning until their slender evening meal without a morsel.

Elsie found her in more cheerful spirits to-night, for Hope, which belongs to the springtime of life, sprang up anew in this pure young heart.

"I knew you would get something soon, dear, and I have splendid news to tell you. Mr. Price, the foreman, has been very kind to me, and to-day he told me to put away my lunch and go to dinner with him. I thanked him and went, and do you believe, he ordered the finest dinner for me, chicken and everything! So I saved the lunch for supper and you can have all the more. You dear child, I'm afraid you haven't always had enough. I wanted to slip half the good things in a napkin and bring them to you. It seemed selfish not to; but wasn't that nice of Mr. Price? I just feel as if my fortune is made. So cheer up; I'll take care of you, Puss, until you strike such luck as I have."

Rosy hope, how little it takes to spread your sails, and how far you fly with the slightest breeze.

Elsie had not received her promised increase in pay, but she was glad over the present. Mr. Price was pleased with her, so she was satisfied.

Nelle's fingers were found to be very deft and she bore home in triumph the first week four shining dollars. But Elsie noticed with some concern that Nelle was too weary for any fun and made rather a dull companion for the lively girl, whose work was not so strenuous, or her application to duty so close, that she yet felt severely taxed.



Besides, was she not growing in favor with Mr. Price? That was sufficient to make her step buoyant.

"Poor little Nelle!" thought Elsie. "I wish somebody would give her nice dinners like Mr. Price does me."

Nelle dropped to sleep as soon as her tired head touched the pillow, but Elsie was too excited, for Mr. Price had come on the same car and insisted upon paying her fare. "Another nickel saved," thought Elsie, to whom the pennies meant so much. "Mr. Price said that I pleased him more and more. How nice looking he is, too. His eyes are so deep and——" but sleep closed her own bright orbs.

After a short time Nelle's work was ended. Then began the same weary quest. Up and down the street she wandered, only to be greeted with the disheartening news: "Nothing at present."

Elsie was a faithful prop, however, for life looked very bright to her. Several times Mr. Price had taken her to the theater, from whence she came home in gay spirits. She wakened Nelle to describe to her the dazzling lights and lovely dresses.

"It is a shame, Nelle dear, that you cannot have any fun. I am going to take you myself some night."

Nelle smiled wearily. "No, you shall not, for it is all we can do to meet our expenses now. I won't go; so there!"

Drifting onward, these gentle ones! Is it toward danger their innocent feet are tending?

Only a few blocks away were many true-



hearted people with daughters not a particle more lovely than these homeless ones. But glad and secure in their own happiness, they heeded not the lonely and unprotected lambs who might so easily become the prey of the wolf.

When our real homes become centers of light, and the lonely boys and girls in tiny rooms in cheap boarding houses, are sometimes invited into the warmth and cheer of truly happy firesides, many of them will escape the danger of those friendships that so often work ruin in many a fair life.



### CHAPTER XIII.

“But the vision was sealed upon my soul,  
And its memory is shrined in fragrance.”

During the days that followed Mr. Alexander's illness, Lora found much comfort in the friendship of Muriel Robbins, whose home life presented such a contrast to her own. Mrs. Robbins spent much time with the five children, all of whom were now maturing into young womanhood and manhood. Lora loved to linger there.

“Mrs. Robbins, how do you endure it to be with disagreeable people, or were you ever?”

Lora enjoyed these snatches of talk while waiting for Muriel.

“Yes, indeed, I have often been,” the lady replied. “I know how hard it is, and would like to tell you what came to me when quite weary trying to adjust myself to those who vexed me.”

“Please tell me,” Lora said, eagerly, her beautiful eyes filling with tears. This little heart to heart talk meant so much to her.

“I was reclining upon the couch when two sweet visions came to me. First, I saw myself and two others, the one who was disagreeable to me and my Muriel. My child clasped the hand of the person who was distasteful to me, and then mine, so that I felt a sweet influence between us on that



side, but upon the other there was a break. Nothing for it but I must take the hand that I recoiled from. In other words, I must be in closer contact than I desired, as we are obliged to be often in every day life. I shrank back, and while the circle was left open, suddenly a fourth Form came and filled the break, clasping the hand I could not, then mine. So between the unpleasant companion and myself, on the one side, was Muriel, who has ever been to me an angel of light, while upon the other, spanning the space, was a Form whose kingly bearing raised Him head and shoulders above the rest of us. Behold the completed circle! And, Lora, dear, then I had a glimpse of a fully rounded out symmetrical life. And this is the 'possible (attainment) that lies beside us ever fresh, fairer than aught which any life hath owned, making divine amends.' I realized it now, for all sense of irritation left me. I was stilled in spirit. I looked across the circle into the face of my former adversary, and in the place of the ill-will I had so frequently seen there, I read ignorance, not the meanness I had been positive was inbred. Just then a line from Lowell came to me: 'Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.' She was His and so was I, and with that Royal Person between us, the bitterness melted away."

Lora had never experienced such teachings. "I do not wonder that Muriel is so lovely," she thought, "for I never knew a woman so delicately refined and sweet before."



"Please, may I hear the next one?" Lora asked, wistfully.

The expressive face before her was an interesting study to Mrs. Robbins, and she knew that her words were taking a strong hold upon the susceptible young heart.

"I was having a trying time in my daily routine and near the border line of exhaustion. I closed my eyes wearily, but did not sleep. A thought came to me about the three Hebrew children."

Lora was not familiar with Bible lore and Mrs. Robbins saw she looked puzzled.

"You know those three people with the dreadful names, who were 'cast into a fiery furnace?'"

Lora vaguely recalled hearing the story when a child.

"It came to me that I was right then in a furnace. Not one of affliction, but nevertheless a real furnace, for a multiplicity of annoying things was racking my mind and reacting upon my body, so that I felt my lack of control. Then I realized that life had many furnace fires into which we are thrown. It may be 'a furnace seven times heated' of fierce trouble for some; it may differ in degree of intensity, but I believe we are all cast into them at times, and I thought with gladness that I was not alone in my furnace any more than the Hebrew children were. The thought helped me as nothing else had, for I felt that in my furnace, as into the circle previously, came a wondrous Form whose Presence hushed the contest in my soul, the flames which had blazed so threateningly



were stayed, and I heard a voice saying: '*I am in the midst, you shall not be moved.*' Then, Lora, I knew that One who is greater than fire or tempest had come into my furnace and that the 'fourth Form' was like the Son of God."

Mrs. Robbins said these words so softly and reverently, that Lora sat entranced. Religious talk of any kind was like a foreign language to her, but this was so genuine and practical she was charmed.

"That kind of a life would be worth while," thought the girl, and all the way home she pondered it, "I am sure that papa has a furnace, and I wish he knew about the Kingly Form who walks the furnace and stills the fire. I wish he knew!"



## CHAPTER XIV.

“In the furnace God may prove thee  
But to bring thee forth more bright,  
But He'll never cease to love thee  
Thou art precious in His sight.”

Mrs. Robbins had heard the song for days, “It ran in her head,” she said. Little did she dream how soon the words would be fulfilled in her life. Out of many trials she had come forth stronger and more sympathetic with others, but no crushing sorrow had ever touched their home.

Perhaps long expected blows are just as severe, but certainly one that comes out of a serene summer sky is more astounding at the time, and crushes all before it into a dazed numb despair.

There are pictures too delicately beautiful to be caught by the most artistic touch, so there are sorrows so sudden, and terrible that belie all word portrayal.

We pass over the description, which would only work agony in the minds of our readers, to the sad announcement that the sweetest flower of the Robbins' home was suddenly transplanted to unfold its full beauty in a fairer Garden, unharmed by the rude winds of earth, unchilled by its sorrows.

In perfect health and glowing girlhood, a sad accident—and the life and sparkle of the home was gone!



Lora Alexander was feeling specially happy that afternoon. She had been upon a pleasant shopping excursion with her mother, and returned home full of girlish animation over the pretty things she had purchased.

Mother and daughter enjoyed these trips together, for Lora admired and was proud of her mother's beauty, and truly loved her. Mrs. Alexander was likewise fond of this bright daughter and of whose deeper nature she stood somewhat in awe.

She had smiled over some of the things Lora had told her about the Robbins home life, and hoped that they would not make Lora pious; still, she respected the family and had no objection to the growing intimacy between Lora and her young friend, whose attractiveness touched all hearts that came within her gentle sway.

"I believe the flowers blossom where Muriel steps," Lora had remarked, as they were rolling homeward in their carriage.

"I do not doubt it, Lora, for she certainly makes the atmosphere beautiful wherever she is. I am very glad to have you invite her here."

Scarcely had they rested from their trip, when a boy rang the bell furiously, and when admitted rushed by the servant into the room where Lora was sitting.

"It's a terrible accident and—" he panted for breath.

"Who? who?" screamed Lora, jumping up and wringing her hands as she thought of her father.



"Muriel Robbins!"

Lora sank down. She did not faint or lose consciousness. She wished she might and shut out the blinding ache of her heart.

"No! no! no!" she exclaimed. "It cannot be! I saw her yesterday." They had walked from school together.

Lora had never come in contact with death in any phase before, and its sudden touching one she fondly loved, filled her with such dismay that she shuddered as with a severe chill. All the beautiful world had grown dark and cold, her heart cried out for her father, whose arms had been her refuge in every small grief of childhood; but then she remembered that this was something even he could not shield her from. The words of Mrs. Robbins came to her about the furnace. "O she is in it, seven times heated now! I wonder if the 'fourth Form' is there, and if she can feel him now in all this terrible heat?"

Mr. Alexander heard the news and hurried home to clasp his loved child in his arms.

"O papa! papa!" she called, and buried her face on his shoulder.

Mr. Alexander's heart ached to comfort her, but he could not say one word, while across the darkness of his mind came the words: "If any man will open the door, I will come in."

"If I had 'opened the door' that night, I might have helped her bear this," he thought, remorsefully.

Lora had sobbed until her tears were gone, and



while the ache remained, she could not cry any more, for she had wept as only intense natures can, and was now suffering sheer exhaustion.

"Papa, do you think that everybody has furnace fires to go through?"

"I hoped that you would not have for long years yet, and never if my love could prevent it."

"But papa, you cannot keep it off, and I wish I knew about One who goes into the fire and helps them bear it! I don't know Him. Do you?"

This cry of her heart was like a dagger through her father's. The pain was evident in his usually controlled face, but he uttered no word, for what could he say?

As he tenderly stroked her hair, he would have given almost anything life held for him to have answered her cry for help.

What was earthly position and wealth? How paltry it seemed. How its value shrunk before the eternal realities that his child was then facing!

It brought back the old struggle. He thought of his beautiful Marie upstairs and how he wished that she might help them.

At that moment of weakness there came before his mental vision a face full of purity and truth, deep, earnest eyes met his.

"You must go to bed and try to sleep, my Sweet," he said, as he recalled himself.

"Sleep! Oh, papa, how can I?"

"I know! I know!" was all the poor man could say, realizing his own powerlessness more than ever.



Lora kissed him good-night and went slowly up stairs. She could not rest, so sought her mother's room.

Mrs. Alexander was shocked at her daughter's pale face. "Why, Bonnybell, are you ill?"

"No, mamma, only it so dreadful it seems like I will die."

Her mother with real solicitude put her arms about her.

"Mamma, do you know about any One big and strong who helps people when such things happen?"

It was the first time in the gay and pleasure loving life of Mrs. Alexander that her thoughts had been so confronted. She looked down at her only daughter and a pang smote her heart. "What if it had been Lora?" She patted her softly like a little child. It soothed the girl, for who of us out-grow, at times, the need of such a quieting touch so hushing to childhood?

"I am going to put you in bed, my Bonnybell, and fix you up all nicely for the night. Then, after a good sleep, you will feel better."

"But, mamma, I wish you would tell me something strong. Do you know about the 'Fourth Form' who walks the flames?"

"My Bonny, you are ill tonight and it frightens me to hear you say such things. I know it was an awful shock and I am sorry." Tears filled Mrs. Alexander's eyes for a moment, as she made her daughter comfortable.

But through the long hours Lora struggled alone with her grief. An idolized child, surrounded by



all that wealth and culture could desire, yet the young girl lay with wide open eyes, staring out into the strange unknown, which seemed terrible to her now that Muriel was gone into it.

"I wish I knew! I wish I knew!" was her heart cry.

Below her father paced the floor until a late hour. Self accusing thoughts arose within him, and for the first time in his life the proud man exclaimed, half audibly, "Yes, I wish I knew Him, too, Lora!"

Stock exchange, the rise and fall of earthly profit, seemed strangely trivial, when forced to face these vital things of life.

Was it in vain, the life of that sweet flower?

All along the way its fragrance had perfumed the air with its delicious breath, until its change of climate brought not only the Alexanders, but many others to consider the deeper side of life, and caused them to think, if only for a brief time, of the "other world that lies around us like a shroud, the world we cannot see."

So young, so beautiful, so lovely in character!

Why, why, are such taken when earth has such need of their pure influence?

Holding back the questions which we dare not dwell upon, we know that a wise Gardener would not leave a rare or delicate plant exposed to a chill atmosphere, when he knew it must suffer from the rude blast, knew that its fragile beauty would be broken, so He, who once through human tears was mistaken by Mary, and by a divine intuition



called—*the Gardener*, stooping to observe the exquisitely tinted petals of this human flower, wisely saw that to leave it to bear the keen earth winds, and to endure the transition to summer's scorching heat, would be crushing to one cast in so delicate a mould, so with tenderest compassion He transplanted the flower, and in the fairest of King's Gardens, under skies never darkened by a storm, among all the choice spirit flowers of the ages, unfolding in full perfection, *she lives*, "a star of perfect day!"



## CHAPTER XV.

My Dear Mother:

I have the best news for you. I'm promoted and getting ten dollars a week!

Recovered? Well, just tell the kids to put on an extra chunk of wood, and 'Polly put the kettle on and we'll all take tea.'

If I could be there, wouldn't we celebrate?

Any way, I was so happy that I only got out of the office in time to keep from throwing up my hat and yelling 'Hurrah, boys!'

It happened in this wise: Mr. Ford, who is an inspector, found that most of the boys spent their time at noon in a neighboring saloon, where they serve free lunches.

That makes you shudder, I know, mother, but I don't wonder the poor fellows do, for many of them work for starvation wages. Besides, the saloon men are awful nice to a fellow. Then, if you can get that much free, why, it seems to help out for the time being; but then don't look scared. I know it does not pay in the end, and thereby hangs my tale, as well as Shakespeare's.

One day Mr. Ford came up at lunch time where I sat munching a bun and studying shorthand.

"Hello! this looks like industry!" he said, as he sat down beside me.



"Well, Sonny, why are you not out with the boys, getting a free lunch and having some fun, as they call it?"

"I haven't time in the first place; besides—" I hesitated, for I didn't exactly want to pose as 'a goody,' you know. "Well, the fact of the matter is, I don't think much of free lunches and such company."

"Bravely said, my boy. You stick to that and you will get to the top yet."

I never thought of it again, but a week later Mr. Ford told me that the general manager, Mr. White, wanted to see me in his office.

I mentally hurried over all my sins of omission and commission, while visions of being 'fired' loomed up before me, and when I reached the door I experienced a curious feeling in my knees, resembling somewhat the way I felt when I spoke my first piece the last day of school. Now, I was thoroughly convinced that I had reached my 'last day' with the esteemed firm of White & Co.

I opened the door and was somewhat reassured by the smiling faces of several very nice gentlemen.

Mr. White shook my hand cordially, while my hopes began to revive slightly.

"So you are the young fellow who does not believe in free lunches, and who studies during your leisure moments?"

My heart gave a sudden thud of rebounding hope.

"Let me see your fingers. You never had much to do with cigarettes, it is evident?"



"I smoked them twice, sir, when with a crowd of boys, but they made me sick; besides—"

"Besides what?"

"Well, you see I have a mother who is opposed to that sort of thing."

"You will do! Stick to your principles and you will amount to something yet. Take this note to Ford and tell him I wish he could turn off a lot of those loafers and get a hundred more just like you."

May be I didn't feel pretty good, mother, but I knew that you would feel better still. There, now, don't get teary; I'm not half as good as your boy ought to be.

When Ford read the note he came straight to me and shook hands: "I am instructed to give you a promotion to ten dollars a week, and if you continue to make yourself valuable to your employers you will receive fifty dollars a month after a while."

May be I didn't nearly go up in the air! Now, you give the children a taffy pull in honor of the event, and I will foot the bill. As sure as fate, Claudius Cæsar, as well as Bert, shall go through school, and pretty soon you will not take in a bit more sewing, mother, for I have grown fully six inches since this afternoon, and I am 'feeling like a drate big man,' as little Fred says. In a few years I will be able to take splendid care of you. O mother! Isn't it the greatest luck?

Tell Bess that some day she shall have the doll



she has wanted so long, the one with long curls and that goes to sleep. Don't sew too much. Tell the boys to help you good, or I will attend to them. Write by return mail to your grown up son.

MARSHALL THOMAS ALLEN.



## CHAPTER XVI.

Little Marion had been one year in attendance upon the sewing, music, and cooking classes of the settlement. She was becoming proficient in other ways, and among the many promising children the teachers felt Marion to be the most remarkable.

She returned their interest with an ardent affection. Miss Eldah Homesworth was still her idol, and under her care she had caught a degree of refinement which proved the attainment possible if rescued from her environment.

Mr. Kingsley had worked faithfully to secure a case against her people, but as yet had not been able to bring it to fruition.

So the most they could hope for at present, was to protect her as far as possible by instilling a desire for purity and higher conditions.

Miss Homesworth had many heart to heart talks with her little charge, and in them she taught her the terrible evil of vice, that she must shun it as poison.

The child responded to her touch as the Aeolian harp to the playing of its master, the Wind.

Although Marion had been born and reared in an atmosphere whose every breath was polluted, still, in strange contrast, there was in her being



an innate nobleness which had always caused the vicious life around her to be positively repulsive.

"I hate it!" she often muttered, when obliged to leave her friends and return to her so called home.

Miss Homesworth had instructed Marion that if any attempt was made to violate her chastity, she was to escape, if possible, to her.

"It appears little short of criminal to leave the child in such a place, Mr. Kingsley," she ventured one day to say, in a talk after the children had gone.

"Criminal it is, but I see no way of deliverance at present. I shall never give her up, but I have to tread softly, for I have already angered her mother and constantly fear she may forbid the child's coming here."

"That would be awful! So I suppose we must let her remain a while longer. Mr. Kingsley, I do not see how you can endure this atmosphere all the time."

"I have to look skyward, at the clouds of God, often, Miss Homesworth, or I could never bear the sight of the sin and anguish of these lives about me."

"You are heroic, Mr. Kingsley," Miss Homesworth could not refrain from saying, as she put on her wraps to depart.

The grave face before her lightened as if the sun had suddenly broken over a rugged mountain peak.

"No, not that, but I am doggedly persistent. I



plod onward whether things look dark or bright. I am going with you to the car."

Miss Homesworth laughed a clear, ringing laugh that was good to hear. "Indeed, you are persistent, for as the homely little poem says, you 'keep a-goin.' I laughed because you reminded me of it. I put it in my mirror one day when feeling gray blue over these life problems, and its effect was so instantaneous that I learned it."

"May I share its cheer? I need all the inspiration I can get."

"If you strike a thorn or rose,  
Keep a-goin'.

If it rains, or if it snows,  
Keep a-goin'.

'Taint no use to sit and whine  
If the fish ain't on your line,  
Bait your hook and keep on tryin',  
Keep a-goin'.

If the weather kills your crop,  
Keep a-goin';

When you tumble from the top  
Keep a-goin'.

'Spose you're out every dime,  
Gettin' broke ain't any crime,  
Tell the world you're 'feelin' prime!  
Keep a goin'."

"Thank you, I feel much refreshed and ready to 'keep a-goin' again' ' again."



"Well, I must be going, or my father will put a stop to these trips. You know he objects to them very much."

Mr. Kingsley looked at her intently a second, he escorted her to the car and then with quickened step, and more elasticity than usual, passed on to see some of his charges. He felt strangely light hearted. Some way he always touched a responsive chord in his conversations with Miss Homesworth. "She is a rare girl," he thought. He caught up one of the children in his arms, and having no deeper clue to his thoughts, we must infer that the remark applied to the small lady who nestled there so contentedly.

"Hush! you must be awful still, 'tause my mamma is asleep," little Ruth held up her hand warningly.

"Ruthy and I takin' tare of mamma. Her seeped a long time," baby Esther said.

The boys were out doors, so silence was supreme.

"I'm glad you tamed, brother," Ruth said, for mamma don't open her eyes at all, and I want her."

A misgiving chilled Mr. Kingsley's heart. He stepped to the sick room and looked in. There she lay in a tranquil slumber, a smile upon her face.

He returned to the little ones and they each possessed themselves of a knee. But after a time he thought the sleep an unusual one in length, and went to the bedside. Still the same sweet smile. He touched her forehead—"She saw the lights of Home far out at sea, and now she has entered port!"



"I want my mamma to kiss me," said Ruthy, as she tugged at her hand.

"Me, too," chimed in baby Esther. "Me want to be tised, too. Mamma, 'ou seeped long enough; tiss me."

Poor darlings! Mr. Kingsley's heart was deeply touched for these helpless ones.

Charlie and John rushed in full of boyish excitement. "I never did it either! I'll tell mamma on you, Charlie Coleburn."

"Be still, boys!" said Brother, wondering how he should break the news to them.

"Is she worse?" John asked, anxiously.

"No, she is better." Then he told him as gently as well as possible that she was well forever more, but gone to Heaven.

"My mother gone and left us all alone!" exclaimed John, as the sad truth began to dawn upon him. He rushed into the room where she was and threw himself upon the bed, bursting into a flood of tears, in which he was joined by Charlie and Ruth, who only half comprehended their loss.

"Jesus taked mamma," Ruth murmured through her tears.

"He must have made a hole in her head, then, to get her out of her body." Charlie stopped crying long enough to look critically at the still figure upon the bed. "I don't see any, though. But how could he get her away from us when she is right here?"

This greatest of all mysteries was puzzling the child's mind.



John raised his head to look at her. "O Brother! what will happen to us now?" he questioned.

"You are God's lambs, and He will take care of you," Mr. Kingsley said, with a heavy heart, for he realized the full weight of the burden that was laid upon him.

"Where shall I put them, and what do first?" he questioned. "If I could only adopt them all!" His large heart proving expansive enough to take in all the lonely children within his reach.

"They need a lady here. I wish Miss Homsworth could come. She would know the best thing to do; but her people so object that I must not ask her to come only to her classes."

One of his trusty women helpers being summoned, he left to make the outside arrangements necessary to the laying away of this sweet mother.

"I went up stairs feeling more buoyant than usual," he mused. "I descend with the burden of four young lives laid upon me. No place to put them but an orphan's home, and that seems so hard, for they are so bright and lovable. I believe I will put their pictures in the paper. They might appeal to some childless couple."

"Whosoever receiveth one of these little ones receiveth Me."



## CHAPTER XVII.

“Oh that refuge from the world where a stricken son or daughter  
May seek with confidence of love a father's hearth and heart!  
Sure of a welcome, though others cast them out; of kindness though men scorn them,  
And finding there the last to blame, the earliest to commend.”

Returning to her beautiful home from the Settlement one day, Miss Homesworth, chanced to be seated by a little shop girl, whose bright face attracted her. Feeling strangely drawn to the child,—for she was only seventeen,—she engaged her in conversation, and discovered that the girl and her friend were alone in the city.

“Do you attend any church?” asked her interested listener.

“No; we went every Sunday for several months, but beyond two or three elderly gentlemen who shook hands with everybody, no one spoke to us, and it made us so homesick that we stopped going.”

“You dear child! Haven't you a friend in the city?”

“No, Nelle and I are alone, except—” a fine blush overspread the girl's face. “I have one friend. He found out how alone I was, and has been very kind to me. He has taken me to the theater several times.”



"But do you know anything about him?" asked the somewhat Puritanic girl at her side.

"No, only he is a perfect gentleman and so kind to me."

Our sweet home girl put her daintily gloved hand upon that of the other girl's, as she said, in a winning way, "I would like to have you come and see me, will you?"

"Oh, may I? Would you really like me to?"

"Certainly, or I would never have asked you, and I am going to call upon you, so please give me your address."

"Oh, *will* you?"

The pleading tone was full of pathos.

Miss Homesworth felt this young girl's danger and resolved to befriend her.

"I will hunt up those girls as soon as possible," she thought, as Elsie left the car. "I really seem to be drifting more and more into this work, in spite of father's pronounced objections to my thus abandoning a more intellectual career."

What a happy circumstance seemed this meeting, for Nelle, as well as Elsie, had greater need of a friend than ever. Not only in the city, but in the wide world, the child was homeless. Left an orphan at an early age, her life had indeed been a checkered one.

She had made excellent progress in school and become a great favorite with her teachers, but her life had held little love.

Poor, hungry-hearted little girl! Type of many who pour out their heart's best affection upon some



rascal of a man, who through politeness and apparent kindness wins their trusting hearts.

A roomer on the top floor had noticed bright Elsie and sweet Nelle, and then and there in his black heart resolved to win the latter's love.

Accordingly, at the close of a dreary day, when Nelle had fought all the way home the feeling that on one in the world except Elsie cared much what became of her, she was met at the entrance by a gentleman who smilingly said: "Good evening."

Nelle was surprised to have anyone notice her. It was always Elsie who attracted attention when they were out, although Nelle was the prettier of the two.

The gentleman walked down the hall and up to her door. You've had a hard day and look all tired out. You feel discouraged, don't you?"

Nelle brightened. It meant so much to have anyone interested in her.

"Did I look blue? I don't feel so now."

They had stopped at her door. "I've noticed you for some time and I thought I would like to get acquainted. My name is Robb."

To think anyone should be so sympathetic and care to know her, the homeless one!

It was not foolish vanity. A lonely heart often grasps at a crumb of comfort and there are moments in the existence of every one, when a smile or a word of interest, is of priceless value, and that moment with dear little Nelle was now.

"I have made a beginning," thought the gentle-



man, as he passed up the stairway. "She is as sweet and modest as she is pretty."

That night Elsie found Nelle in strangely good spirits, for ere she reached the door, she heard her singing, and instead of the spiritless companion she had been meeting on her return of late, Nelle ran to meet her, smiling brightly.

"Why, Nelle! Has fortune smiled upon you, a great uncle returned from over the seas, or what has happened to make you look like a girl again?"

"Why, have I been looking like an old woman?"

"I should say you had, as forlorn as if you were going straight to the poor house."

Nelle laughed out with real gleefulness.

"Now, tell me quickly, for I am being consumed with that trait which gentlemen are so ready to label as a purely feminine quality, although to them I would maintain the contrary."

"I haven't a thing to tell you," Nelle answered, without raising her eyes. "I just feel happier and I couldn't tell you why to save me."

"My! you look so pretty, I'm afraid if Mr. Price saw you to-night he would never look at me again."

"O nonsense! Everybody looks at you, your laughing eyes, plump cheeks, and mischief, are irresistible."

"'Even exchange is no robbery.' We are quite a mutual admiration society to-night. But I am glad you feel happier, for I blamed myself all the way home, for I have promised to go out with Mr. Price this evening, and I don't like to leave



you alone so much, but he wants me to call upon some friends of his, such nice girls, he says."

"Oh, go on, I don't mind. I've this new book from the library and will have a good time with it. But Elsie, this is your night for writing home, and you know how it worries your mother when you are careless about writing."

"That's so," said Elsie, with real compunction of conscience. "Poor mother!" I wish I could see her this minute. I will write to her to-morrow night sure, even if I have to break an engagement with Mr. Price.

The bell rang and her escort stood at the door. "Good-bye, Nelle, dear. Don't read your eyes out. I'll be home early tonight."

Nelle, left alone, divided her thoughts between her book and new friend.

The next evening and the following, until it came to be an expected occurrence, Mr. Robb was at the entrance ready to walk up stairs with her.

Each evening Elsie was delighted to find Nelle in such good spirits.

"It is the strangest thing how you have changed lately, Nelle! You are never blue at all."

Nelle's pale cheeks flushed slightly, but she was too busy preparing their evening meal for Elsie to notice how her eyes brightened.

Elsie had related the delightful evenings she had spent lately with Mr. Price's friends. "He has such charming friends, I wonder that he cares for me." Elsie was one scarlet flame as she made this confession.



Nelle put her arms around her friend, saying, "I don't wonder he likes you. Who could help it?"

A peep into the depths of the two young hearts, until now kept safe and pure.

Are there not attendant angels guarding such winsome, unprotected girlhood?

Yes, but the guardianship is often entrusted to human hands, and when they fail to recognize their responsibility, how little hope that these lambs will escape the prey of the wolf?

We trust that the story of Nelle and Elsie will not stir the reader for only a moment, and end with the perusal of this book.

Miss Homesworth fully intended to call upon the friendless girls, but in some way she lost their address.

Elsie was in exceedingly gay spirits of late. She felt the stir of new impulses. Life seemed all brightness and joy. She worked with a song at her heart and was the life of every group of girls that she entered.

Mr. Price became more and more devoted. "She will be a pet I'll not tire of" he remarked mentally, as he looked at her admiringly, but in a way that would make any reader of the human face draw the child within some safe shelter, for it was not love's pure fire that burned in his eyes.

Alas! bright little bird, use your wings, fly! If you have any power left to exert, ere your will is paralyzed by the new and dangerous influence which fascinates you. Fly! fly! for God's sake,



fly to your mother's humble but pure fireside! Go quickly ere it be too late!

"There! I've written mother a nice long letter that will cheer her up for a good while."

"Give her my love, Elsie. I wish I had a mother to write to. I would be better to her than you are."

"I dare say you would, for you are a dear child, but I always was wayward. Now I must go. I'm to meet Mr. Price in the park at eight. Here are two kisses, and I will give you one of the roses he gave me."

Nelle took it, wondering if anyone would ever love her enough to give her such flowers. She watched Elsie go down the street, and thought how hard it would be for them to part when she married Mr. Price. "I shall be left alone before long, and she is the dearest friend I have."

A strange depression seized her. She sank on the bed and cried so long that at length, exhausted, she fell asleep.

She did not waken for hours, and was astonished to find the light still burning and that she had been asleep with all her clothes on.

"Why, it must be time for Elsie to come!" She looked at the tiny clock. "Three o'clock!" Nelle felt every drop of blood leaving her heart.

She ran to the window. All was still in the noisy street below. "Elsie! Elsie!" she called aloud, but the empty room only gave back an echo in answer.

She paced the floor. What *should* she do?

She thought wildly of hailing the first person she



saw pass and ask them to go in search of her friend, then the hopelessness and absurdity struck her.

She put on a wrap and ran down stairs and stood in the entrance, hoping to see a policeman, but none came. At length, gathering courage through desperation, she ran down street to the police station, that happily was not far.

Wild-eyed, she invaded the place and found the chief himself, into whose ear she poured her tale.

He promised to do all that was in human power and himself escorted her home.

Dawn came at last, and Nelle went breakfastless to her work. She did not know how she could work, with such suspense eating out her heart, but she feared she might lose her place if she remained at home.

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Mr. Alexander lived far remote from this quarter of the city, and was, of course, unconscious of Elsie's existence until he picked up the paper and read of the disappearance.

"How terrible!" he exclaimed, as he thought of his own sweet daughter, but soon dismissed the subject, as it was too sadly common to cause more than a passing remark.

Every little while somebody's child was disappearing within the whirlpool of city life.

"It is awful! but I have nothing to do with it. Thank God! I am not responsible."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

What the days and nights which followed the close of the last chapter were to Nelle, can be known only to those who have experienced the slow eating agony of suspense.

She was in torture not only regarding Elsie's fate, but in great indecision as to her duty to the girl's mother.

Had the mother been in comfortable circumstances, she would not have hesitated a moment, but she knew how difficult it would be for her to make the long journey, and each day hoped for some clue that would render it unnecessary.

In all this trying time the only friend she could turn to was Mr. Robb, who made the most of his opportunity to offer condolences and suggest plans.

Many of the best people in the city, like Mr. Alexander, had read of Elsie's strange disappearance, and with several it had touched them deeply for a moment, as the thought came: "What if it were my child!" But it was a subject too sad to dwell upon; besides, as one said to another: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

But white winged messengers do not hover over the sin cursed city in vain. And these shining ones find some responsive hearts to whom they whisper their messages.



Such a soul was Mary Worthington, whose whole nature had become more and more attuned to the higher things of life, and who was ever quick to be thrilled by the call of duty.

She was making the world beautiful about her now for a brief time, visiting in the home of her daughter, Katherine Trueman.

The sweet intimacy of mother and daughter in earlier years, had ripened, and as Katherine experienced the holy joys of motherhood, she became better able to appreciate the fine qualities of her own mother.

It was after a day of pleasure with her three charming granddaughters—whose devotion to her was fairly idolatrous—that “Big Mansie,” as the children named her, was half reclining upon the couch, looking so fresh and unwrinkled that it would be difficult to pronounce the word “grandmother” in connection with her.

Suddenly a pained look came over her otherwise happy face, and when Noble returned a short time after, he found her greatly agitated over the sad story of Elsie’s disappearance, of which she had read in the evening paper.

“Noble, something must be done to save that girl!”

“Well, I suppose the policemen are doing all they can.”

“Possibly, if there is plenty of money paid them for it. But do you think that if she is a friendless girl they will be equally vigilant?”

“They ought to be.”



"Yes, but Noble, you know they are too often bribed by wrongdoers to help protect themselves."

"I suppose so, but it seems a terrible thing to say of our city government that it does not protect the helpless."

Mrs. Worthington slept little that night, and long ere the watch was over, her decision was reached.

She had asked for guidance in regard to her own responsibility, and clearly as a clarion call to battle, the answer came. She did not wish to mingle in this sorrowful story. Her refined and delicate nature shrank from contact with evil; but duty was spelled large in this woman's character, and when it was laid upon her she never shirked.

Next morning found her quite an early caller at the home of a friend, whose cultured, wholesome face looked the embodiment of motherly kindness.

Mrs. Nance and Mary Worthington had become friends through the latter's frequent visits at the home of her daughter, and these life touchings had cemented a strong friendship.

"What shall we do about it?"

Mrs. Worthington held out the article which had haunted her all night.

After a spirited talk, these queens of womanhood decided that duty plainly called them to the ordeal.

"I will call for you in my carriage to-night at six. My husband will accompany us, and doubtless Mr. Trueman will also, if you ask him."

Arriving at home, Mrs. Worthington imparted the plan to Katherine, who deemed it the height of folly and determined she would insist upon



Noble's vetoing it at once. Imagine having *her* mother going into such a quarter of town and being mixed up in such an affair! With her old impetuosity she declared "she wouldn't consider it for a moment."

Mrs. Worthington pushed back Gladys' curls, and as the clear, expressive eyes were lifted to hers, said: "Katherine, look down the years and suppose that Noble was taken away and left this child unprotected, imagine how terrible it would be if some base wretch gained a hold upon her heart and caused her to disappear! Would you not beseech Heaven, almost with drops of blood upon your brow, to save your child and preserve the jewel of her womanhood unsullied? I feel that some one is entreating Heaven for that lost girl, cries of a soul in agony reach my heart and stir it almost to the point of breaking. Perhaps it is the poor child herself pleading for help. I seem to hear her, and go I must until I find her."

Katherine's warm heart was touched as she clasped Gladys close, saying: "Go, mother mine. You are truly one of His chosen ones, but I think it is more hopeless and intricate than you realize. To look for the lost in the city is like looking out into Infinity."

"Yes, but I know of a mother who looked ten years in the city for her boy, and found him at last."

"Yes, but why should you spoil our happy times together and wear yourself out for nothing?"

"Because we *are* 'our brother's keeper.' Somebody must take the initiative. I certainly do not



desire to, but I must. Mr. Nance will find out to-day what is being done, and if no one is looking after the matter, we must."

Katherine remembered that her mother's decisions were reached after grave deliberation and were usually inflexible.

Noble shared Katherine's feeling, but a few moments of conversation with Mrs. Worthington convinced him that it was futile to try to swerve a woman who believed that she was right. So he did the only thing remaining for mankind to do under the circumstances—prepared to accompany her.

The carriage called promptly at six and they were soon followed by a cab with two policemen, which Mr. Nance thought wise to have as protection to the party. Also as guides to those places where human flowers are despoiled of their whiteness.

As they passed street after street of repulsive looking dwellings, the whole party shuddered.

An extremely sad expression hovered over Mrs. Worthington's face. She had never been so near to anything contaminating, and it made her heart sick.

But ever before she seemed to see the angel pointing—"Onward!"

Suddenly the carriage stopped, a policeman opened the door. "It is dangerous to stop in this vicinity. Allow me to advise you to take these ladies out of this part of town immediately."

Mrs. Worthington leaned forward in all her



sweet womanly dignity: "Pardon me, sir, but we are looking for a girl who has disappeared, and I am impressed she may be in that house."

"Lady, you are upon a fruitless quest. Hundreds of girls disappear every year and can never be traced. This is no place for respectable people. I cannot think of allowing you ladies to enter that abode. These gentlemen certainly will not permit it."

"No, indeed! You must not go, mother," pleaded Noble.

Then her strength of character was in evidence and gave her the dauntless courage needful for the ordeal.

Noble, I feel that poor child is there. *I am going after her!*"

The policeman led the way, protesting to the last, "I know it is dangerous to go when that red light is displayed, but I will not be outdone by a lady."

Mrs. Nance and the gentlemen followed, greatly fearing insult would be offered.

But there is a spark of divinity in every human soul, and even the vicious have moments when they bow in reverence to purity.

When this queen of womanhood entered the hall it was noisy, but as if an angel had suddenly appeared among them, a marvelous hush stole over the entire group of drinking men and women.

In the center of the group of girls was a figure kneeling at the side of a hardened looking woman.



Her hands were clasped and her whole attitude betrayed intense agony.

Mrs. Worthington hesitated but a moment, then with sure intuition she went straight to the kneeling girl and laid her firm yet gentle hand upon her. "You are Elsie. Come with me. I will save you!"\*

Say not that the power of evil does not tremble in the presence of such nobility.

Not a word of protest was uttered, or a hand raised as Mary Worthington led out the trembling girl.

Do angels carry the tidings of the rescued Home?

Certainly a chorus of shining ones must have made heaven ring with the joyous music over this victory.

A far away mother, humble in this world's estimation, was praying that her child might be protected from danger. The prayer is answered by one of the city's highest types of noble cultured womanhood.

Of what strange combinations is life made up and how interdependent is humanity.

We cannot all be Mary Worthingtons, nor are all called to rescue work, but to be responsive to duty's call and never shirk, is the secret of noble living.

---

\*A true story.



## CHAPTER XIX.

Eldah Homesworth was resting upon a lichen covered log, oaks tall and grand were about her, while yonder the pines made music as the breeze played through them.

She was thinking out loud, as she called the soliloquy: "A white dove wings its way through the air and flutters to the roof of that antiquated hut, purity and earthiness have met, but do not mingle. The dove rests her tired wings upon the earth, which has not power to soil her innate purity. I suppose that is a type of what we are to be, in the world, yet not of it."

"Pardon the intrusion, Miss Eldah. I overheard your remark. May I share your solitude?"

"Certainly."

"Then will you permit me to question your statement?"

"You have my permission."

"How may we keep to that high level when surrounded by the mire and scum, and obliged to breathe the fumes of obnoxious surroundings, instead of the pure mountain air of life?"

There are moments when the soul looks out of its windows and shines with a light that is heaven born. That moment came to Eldah now.

"I do not suppose we are ever placed in circum-



stances so adverse but what we can use our mental wings, and, like the dove, fly above the earthiness and breathe the pure air of Heaven."

"You are so optimistic that you inspire me; but your environment has always been pure. How can you know what it is to be surrounded by the submerged tenth of humanity who are seemingly devoid of a single desire to better their condition. And suppose you were giving out your life to elevate the masses, would it not be hard always to use your mental wings?"

"Hard? Yes, indeed. But look at this forest. Was it grown in a year? That sturdy oak, I am told, is centuries old, yet it came from a tiny seed dropped by one of nature's messengers, who heeded not that an act of blessing was being performed by its silent ministry. Yet generations have come and gone, and many, like us, have blest the unknown benefactor for this shelter from the storm and heat. So you are planting seeds in those children's lives which will develop after a while into flowers and fruit. Therefore, when the shame and sin of life presses you sore, try your mental wings, send your troubled spirit out here to the pines, walk in thought among them and breathe in their healing properties, forgetting the burden and the fret, the stings and jars of life, they will sing to you and ere you know it, your spirit will be soothed."

"Did you ever try your remedy, or, physician like, do you shun your own medicine?" Kingsley asked, mischievously.

"No, sir; I speak from experience, for from child-



hood an escape to the woods always did me good. If I felt cross, I regain my equipoise; if disheartened, I grew courageous. So now when I cannot escape the city limits and pine for the hilltops, I think myself out here and after awhile return refreshed and ready to do the next hard thing."

"Look there, Miss Eldah. That gray color on the mountain is changing into a rare blue. What thought does it give you?"

"This. That the gray of our disappointments in life may change as quickly into a rare beautiful blue. The gray settles down over us as if 'twould never lift, but often, ere we are aware, the panorama changes, the landscape lights up, and after a little we are out in the full sunshine again. No true perspective can be brought out in a picture or life, without the shadows. You are in the gray now, Mr. Kingsley, but even as we sit here you are emerging, and I prophesy you will be in the full blue shortly."

"You have the inner vision that grasps the hidden meaning of life. It is a rare gift. I am fond of bringing my enigmas, for you are sure, Daniel like, to find an interpretation. In this case Marion is the unsolved problem. Can you suggest any plan of rescue? That is really what I came here to talk about."

Eldah played with the pencil with which she had been sketching and was silent. Presently she came out of the deeply thoughtful state into which she had lapsed. I have it! I will interest the girls of our fraternity in her. It will be something novel



for frat girls to do, but I think I can win them over. We will make up a wardrobe for her, watch an opportune moment, when presto! Marion will disappear from her home and reappear clothed in the pretty becoming garments I have been longing to fit her out with. Then we will place her in some nice motherly woman's care, whom we will pay. We will educate her and she will be our protege. Isn't that a splendid plan? It all evolved before my eyes as I began to tell you."

"But perhaps the girls will not be so enthused as you are, Miss Eldah. Few in your circle care what becomes of these unfortunates."

"Never fear for the Delta girls, Mr. Kingsley, for while I admit that we are rather an exclusive set, there's many a true heart beats under the daintily clad exterior. We need a real live object to work for, and certainly adopting a child will be quite unique."

"That relieves my mind if you can work it out. But to change the subject, tell me what this dainty fairy like vine reminds you of? I do not care for the nomenclature, for with all deference to your scientific skill, I am less fond of the ruthless destruction of these floral apostles than of hearing your message as you catch it from their lips. In studying their secret heart, what say they to you?"

Eldah was at her very best when this subject was touched upon, for she was a born scientist, and from childhood the flower stars had talked to her, and the evening stars sang to her. All through her University course she had made a specialty of



science, and was now taking post-graduate work, thus was able to speak with authority along her special line.

She held up the dainty vine and it rested lovingly against her dress.

"As you hold it thus it gives me a thought, Miss Eldah. May I tell you of it?"

"Certainly. Mine will keep and yours will doubtless cause it to ascend in the scale of being. You strike the keynote and I will play the octave."

"The green of the plant stands for everlastingness, the foreshadowing, the type of the glory that is to be revealed here each year in the miracle of the spring, and then beyond life's changes, that which is to glorify our afterward. Then, as it rests against your dress, with its delicate tracery, the thought comes that true womanhood is like the vine, a crown of glory to any man who is pure enough to win her."

Eldah's face was a study. She looked away to the blue tints upon the distant mountains. She evidently was sending her mind out there as she was wont to do. She did not blush or take it personally, as a less rare girl would have done, but proved herself capable of high friendship with the opposite sex by her good sense and quiet self-possession.

Perhaps Mr. Kingsley wished that she would not isolate herself thus, for she seemed to have escaped.

The silence deepened, as it may between genuine friends, but at length Eldah came out of her reserve



and held up the vine: "These dainty, feathery festoonings are the drapery about the entrance to fairyland, through which I catch a glimpse of 'mossy dells, sylvan streams, laughing waterfalls;' I hear the quaint sounds of the dim old forest, chirping insects, the wild canaries, the old black crows and the merry brown thrush. I also discover a cluster of bluebells that ring their sweet melody as I pass. It leads me on deeper and deeper into the heart of the Mother Nature, but lest I become hopelessly lost and turn into a wood nymph, I desist and await your thought."

"I am a boy again, led captive by your witching tale. May I follow my fancy and show you what I see?"

"It will deepen my pleasure, I do assure you, Mr. Kingsley, and inspire me to run the scale into unknown regions, doubtless."

"To us all, presumably, there is a fascination in following a winding path through the woodland, especially if it be one that is full of surprises. I see a genuine wideawake boy going down the path, leaping logs in the stream, giving a wild Indian whoop, chasing the squirrels, whistling a merry tune that awed the birds into silence, then abandoning himself to perfect boyish bliss, baiting a fishhook and flinging it far over the water, while from that source of comfort denied to womankind—a boy's pocket—he produces a backless book and is lost in a thrilling story of adventure. But minutiae grow wearisome. Down the zigzag path of life marches the same sturdy lad, running into all



kinds of danger, but escaping strangely unscathed. The path through the years was a rough one, the way often lonely. But a time came when two diverse paths met and ran parallel for some distance. The small pilgrim, now grown to manhood, met another traveler whose uplifting thoughts gave him new inspiration. The leaves with their mystic writing had found an interpreter, the wayside blossoms, hitherto unnoticed, had opened their secrets to him, because the fair seer who traveled the path near his own had shown him their marvels. But a sudden turn in the way leads him afar from the parallel route. I wonder if the—”

“Supper!” resounds through the forest, just as a laughing party of girls and gentlemen break in upon the *tete a tete*.

“Well, of all things! Have we found you two strays at last? We’ve looked the mountain side over and sounded the gong hard enough to scare all the animals out of the woods.”

“Come, now, Kingsley, we’ll take you prisoner for giving us this fright, but out of respect for your fair companion, we will spare you the humiliation of handcuffs, but you must precede us, as we have orders from the chaperon not to return until we brought back the culprits.”

“There is no appeal?” questioned Kingsley.

“None whatever!”

Eldah was now far ahead with the girls, who were teasing her unmercifully, as only a college crowd can.

“Eldahrema! If I had suspected this, I never



would have formed part of the investigating committee. Why didn't you give us a hint?"

"Say, Eldah, Mr. Richmond was fairly consumed with suspense over your prolonged absence, and nothing would do but we must set out at once to recover you."

"Eldahrema! I am very sure your mamma would object to such serious talks with Mr. Kingsley, whom we all know is nobility itself; but, then, think of Mr. Richmond's worldly prospects and don't become too heavenly minded," added Myrtelius.

"Eldah is a born philanthropist, girls, and like attracts like," exclaimed Dorothea, who was at once the life and torment of the camp. "O Eldah! Eldah! I am almost dissolved in tears at the thought of *you*, a true Delta, Delta, Delta, throwing away your chance to shine socially and—"

"O girls! *Do* be sensible! Cannot a gentleman and lady talk together with any comfort?"

"Not when they shun the crowd in that style and manifest such a decided preference for each other's society to the exclusion of the race of mankind," retorted the ready-tongued Dorothy.

Eldah rushed on ahead of the rest. She flushed and bit her lips. "It just spoils everything," she said; but by the time she reached camp she had recovered her poise and was equal to the occasion.

Kingsley had not escaped the bandying of the gentlemen, some of whom envied him the opportunity of having for a whole afternoon to himself Professor Homesworth's daughter.



## CHAPTER XX.

“Down the zig-zag somebody went,  
On a secret sweet was somebody bent,  
And somebody else must have known the same thing—  
For up the zig-zag somebody came.”

Eldah slipped out of the tent before anyone was awake for a stroll in the freshness of the morning and to seek botany specimens.

She had become an expert in sketching plant life and loved above all things to study it in its native haunts.

This morning she found a curiosity and was looking into its heart, completely oblivious of all else.

“Shall the limited finite fathom Infinity?” she said, gazing earnestly at the mystery.

“Shall man comprehend his Maker, being yet a riddle to himself?” A deep, rich voice answered her from a path near by.

“Oh, good morning, Mr. Kingsley. I am glad to have your philosophical mind to aid me. I am filled with wonder at this. Can you help me fathom it?”

“I answered your question with another, Socrates like.”

“I know it, but we cannot delve deeply enough



to satisfy me. There are always unexplored depths that lure me on."

"We pant, we strain like birds against the wires;  
Are sick to reach the vast and the beyond;—  
And what avails, if still to our desires  
Those far off gulfs respond?  
Contentment comes not therefore; still there lies  
An outer distance when the first is hailed,  
And still forever yawns before our eyes  
*An Utmost* that is veiled."

He quoted.

"I know it, my friend." She liked to call him "my friend." It expressed the strength he was to her. "But there is the delightful thought of progression which is a proof of the immortality of the soul."

"Yes, we recoil from the thought of negation, passing into nothingness. All nature disproves such a theory by the resurrection of her subjects every year. The miracle of the Spring is an exhaustless source of interest to me."

"I would like to discuss evolution with you, Mr. Kingsley; but, dear me! there's the breakfast bell, and—" Eldah felt a flush tint her cheeks at the remembrance of yesterday's volley of teasing.

Mr. Kingsley, with true tact, divined the cause, and suggested that they take opposite paths back to camp.

Eldah flew up the path and entered the tent quite out of breath, but with sparkling eyes and



such a fine color that all remarked about the mountain air agreeing with her.

She was animation personified in displaying her woodland treasures, but when Mr. Kingsley sauntered carelessly in, she became suddenly quiet.

These two are beginning to avoid each other in public.

Mr. Richmond's quick eye noticed the silence on Eldah's part, the almost total indifference that Mr. Kingsley manifested toward her, and thought: "I wonder if they have had a certain talk and she has refused him? They have been such open friends until now."

Richmond brightened up and Eldah thought she never saw him look so handsome.

Breakfast was a lively meal, and when Dorothea, Myrtelius, and several bright people got started, it became quite hilarious.

Dorothy's (the acknowledged leader in all mischief) eyes were dancing as she put the following: "Why is it that when a certain fair botanist is seized with a fit of exploration, a famous philanthropist is affected similarly?"

"Wireless telegraphy!" shouted the crowd, while everybody enjoyed the fun except the parties concerned and Mr. Richmond.

Eldah could have annihilated herself upon the spot, so indignant was she at the rose color that came and went in her face.

Mr. Kingsley was deeply interested in his digestion, apparently giving minute scrutiny to the study



of breakfast foods and absorbed in the momentous question of demand and supply.

Mr. Richmond looked as moody as he had been previously gay, while his thoughts are better left unrecorded.

"Dorothy, did you ever play peek-a-boo in the days of your youth, and haven't you forgotten it yet?" queried Myrtelius.

"Yes," answered the wayward young lady, not to be outdone at the thrust at her Paul Pry qualities, "but I am convinced that this is an age of marvels. We stand upon the threshold of great events. Why, I recall a similar strange atmospheric occurrence that happened in my unsophisticated teens, while I chanced to be a guest at the home of a friend. I was unaware that the parlor was occupied, and distinctly recall how the sudden opening of the door produced the strangest effect, for it sent two young people to the ends of a sofa and set them to counting the figures of the carpet."

A peal of laughter followed this explanation.

"There was certainly some powerful atmospheric pressure going on about that time, to move human beings around like that," laughingly remarked the host, who thoroughly enjoyed these young people.

"Miss Dorothy, I am sure that I voice the sentiment of all, when I say that it is our unanimous desire to be present when you make the fatal plunge," Mr. Kingsley came out of the study of cereals to say.

His laugh rang out heartily, a keynote to the



whole man. It was one of those contagious laughs which makes the world brighter.

"Morning air is a great tonic, Kingsley. I would advise you to continue to take it large doses," one of the gentlemen remarked, as he glanced in Eldah's direction.

"Eldah! I have been fairly consumed with curiosity to fathom the mysteries of telepathy," said Geraldine. "Now *do* enlighten us about this wireless business."

"O Eldah!" exclaimed merry Dorothy, "do tell me what I shall say mentally when I want to meet—to meet Geraldine, you know?"

"O do tell us!" chimed in a chorus of girls' voices, "we want to know how to ring up mentally our—" "Our brothers," laughed Dorothy. "Enlighten us, thou fair seer."

"Eldah, if I were in your place I would compel them to delve into it for themselves," remarked the chaperon.

Eldah gave her friend's hand a grateful squeeze under the table.

So with merry thrusts the party broke up for the day.

"We are to meet promptly to-night at five for supper, and as this is our last campfire, everybody get your stories out and polish up for the event, if you haven't any new ones," announced the chaperon.

All forenoon Mr. Richmond was a moody companion. He disdained fishing and nothing that the rest found pleasure in had any charm for him. He



felt dissatisfied with everything, and perhaps with himself most of all, for with all his wealth and social advantages he was beginning to find that his life lacked something. What the something was had come to him strongly of late, and the more he realized it the unhappier he became, for it seemed receding from his grasp. "I cannot endure this," he mentally decided. "I must know before we leave to-morrow, and this evening there will be no opportunity. I will take her for a walk this afternoon."

But the more he thought of it, the harder it appeared; but suspense was not to be endured by one of his temperament.

He spied Eldah apart from the rest and asked for the pleasure of a walk with her about three p. m.

Eldah readily promised, for she felt a pleasure in his company, although never like going under the surface with him, just having a bright, pleasant time.

She could but feel his admiration, but was so little given to flirting, and, in fact, was so far beyond it, that she considered his feeling for her merely such as true men accord to pure womanhood.

So she went down the dear old woodland path, while the sunlight was glinting the leaves and making the place beautiful with its witching spell.

Poor Richmond had never experienced so trying an ordeal. Eldah, however, divinely unconscious of his struggle, was able to converse fluently upon almost any subject, and kept the conversation flowing at such a rate, that he wondered if he would find an opportunity to say the words that were in



his heart. One moment he wished he might fly to Europe, the next that they might find a deserted island and never quit it. They were seated upon a mossy bank and the sunshine softly touched her hair, making a halo of glory, so Richmond thought, about her pure womanly face.

"I will give all I have upon earth to win her," thought he, but his lips seemed sealed.

Just then Eldah looked at her watch. "The afternoon has flown, Mr. Richmond. Do you know we have just time to get back to camp for supper?"

Mr. Richmond sighed, "Well, the best times always go too swiftly and I should have said two o'clock."

Eldah was her entertaining self all the way back and quite enjoyed the sensation it made when they met the surprised looks of the rest.

"Anyway, I've thrown them off the track and they will have something new to tease about," she thought, triumphantly.

Dorothy got behind a tree, rolled her eyes tragically, threw up her hands in dismay, as she whispered to Geraldine: "Two of them! The plot thickens!"

Mr. Richmond glanced across at Mr. Kingsley with a feeling of triumph for the moment. "Anyway, I had her all to myself these two hours."

Mr. Kingsley apparently was unconscious of the late arrivals. Eldah looked up to meet her friend's welcoming eyes, but he was otherwise interested. Myrtelius and he were engaged in a lively chat.

That evening around the camp fire the stories



flew thick and fast. Ghost stories that would make nervous people see witches through half the night. College reminiscence abounded, stories of midnight feasts, hairbreadth escapes, and thrilling adventures, made the evening one round of gaiety, until it was a late hour, when the hostess announced that "like Israel they must flee to their tents or dawn would overtake them."

But imagine a dozen girls trying to sleep on the last night of camp life.

"Let's have a potato roast down on the beach," suggested Dorothy, for they were camping among the Adirondacks and near a beautiful lake.

"Mrs. Maine will not allow it," responded a dutiful maiden.

"Never mind such a trifle as that. I'll assume all the responsibility in case of discovery."

All but two or three were enthusiastic.

Mr. and Mrs. Maine occupied a summer cottage and the girls were domiciled in the rear in a large tent, while the gentlemen camped some distance off.

"Only don't squeal on us, if you are not going," Dorothy said, rather contemptuously, in parting with the obedient members of the crowd.

Mrs. Maine was very tired and soon sank to rest, from which she was startled by stealthy footsteps. She was positive the girls must be sound asleep, so it was surely some intruder. She awakened her husband—good-natured man that he was—who told her it was only some of her flock, so she composed herself to slumber, presently to be aroused by a loud noise.



"Something fell, Dick. I heard it!"

And be it placed upon record that this remarkable man did not growl at this second interruption of his peaceful slumbers, but sprang out of bed, seizing a candle and revolver and darted to the door.

A hurried flight and suppressed giggling convinced him that those girls were only up to some mischief.

He reassured his wife, and once more peaceful sheet music ensued.

The girls were by this time running breathlessly toward the beach, dodging behind trees to escape detection in case they were followed, and dropping potatoes every few steps, which gave them a lively chase down hill to recover. They finally landed with their burden and were enthusiastically received by the girls who had first escaped.

"Exactly one apiece," Dorothy announced, "so you can fix your appetites accordingly. Eldah and I did our level best to get more, and if you could have known the time we had to secure these! I know that every identical potato had a separate tumble on the floor and we were on the eve of discovery several times by mine host and hostess."

The night was warm for that altitude and ideal in beauty. A full moon made it as light as day. They soon had a big bonfire and their potatoes buried in the sand.

"O Eldah! We haven't any salt!" exclaimed Geraldine, in dismay, for the idea of saltless potatoes was not inviting.

"Yes, we have," producing a salter that she had



carried in her blouse, "but I couldn't get hold of any butter."

"I did, though." Myrtelius drew out a package she had slipped into a cracker box.

"Hurrah!" shouted the girls.

They had each provided a blanket and, Indian fashion, had rolled themselves up and laid down by the fire to enjoy the beauty of the scene.

The sky was cloudless save for a few fleecy ones which made a most picturesque effect when lit up by the moon, while one bright star hung low over the water.

Our scientist loved astronomy, and for some time her thoughts were busy tracing the Pleiades and different constellations. "Fifty years it takes for light to come from the nearest fixed star," she mused. "Then if light began to travel all those long years before I was born, it has not reached us yet."

An artist would have gladly caught that look of uplift which was upon her face.

But in the midst of all this grandeur came the feeling of some soul near her, wakeful, too. A sense of depression stole over her for a moment. "I feel as though some one is thinking of me, and they are sad thoughts," she said to herself.

\* \* \* \* \*

At that moment Mr. Richmond was lying wide awake looking at the same scene and struggling with his heart.

"She is the only woman I ever desired to possess, and I can win almost anyone," he said, pulling his handsome mustache. "But she does not care so



much for wealth as brains. Still, it is not that alone. I believe she would require a pure standard of life from a man, and, by George, she ought to have it. She is worthy of the best. I wish I had half the nobility of Kingsley. He isn't handsome, hasn't money, but everybody feels that he has character. Confound him, anyhow; 'I wish he was in the Isle of Man.' "

The object he wished transported was slumbering peacefully at his side.

Mr. Richmond raised on his elbow and looked at him critically. "Not a striking face; but wait; that's a good forehead, and there is something manly about him. It does not show in any one feature. It is the man himself."

He dropped to his pillow again. "I can't stand this long. I shall see her soon after we leave camp and know the worst. Then, if it's all up, I'll clear out for Europe as soon as possible."

Eldah shook off the feeling of sadness by investigating the potatoes, and discovering that they were thoroughly cooked, aroused the sleeping girls.

Those who have never experienced a potato roast on the beach, have much yet to anticipate. Wrapped in their blankets, and with hair streaming in all directions, they looked quite wild enough for a party of young squaws, as they circled about the fire, munching their potatoes.

"We must see the sunrise on the lake, and then slip back to the tent before the folks are up," Dorothy announced.

Geraldine, the artist of the crowd, had been very



busy with her sketch book, while Dorothy was writing up the escapade for the next month's College Magazine, of which she was the spicy and valued editor.

Eldah had spent most of the night in silence, drinking in the beauty. She thought with awe of the power and Almightiness of God. Her heart thrilled with deep joy. "Who calleth them all by name, by the greatness of His might," she murmured, and then, lulled by the cadence of the waves, she fell asleep and wakened only when the sun was climbing high above the lake.

The rosy light had faded, she had missed the early splendor. "But then I had all the glory I could stand," she said, as they gathered up their belongings to steal homeward ere the camp was awakened.

They found all quiet, and without any compunctions of conscience—for it is said that college people soon dispose of what they possess—the girls tumbled into bed and had a good hour's sleep before the rising bell.

Camp was broken at 9 a. m., and thus ended two weeks of delightful life for the Delta's and their brother fraternity.





DELTA CAMP



## CHAPTER XXI.

“And the postman (that genius indifferent and stern,  
Who shakes out even handed to all from his urn,  
Those lots which so often decide if our day  
Shall be fretful and anxious, or joyous and gay)  
Brings each morning, more letters of the one sort or  
another  
Than Cadmus himself put together to bother  
The heads of Hellenes.”

“A bundle of letters from home, Noble! They just came on the last delivery. I had callers and haven’t had a moment to look at them, so now we will wait until dinner is over to enjoy them together.”

In the pretty dining-room was an interesting group. Gladys’ expressive face was just now thoughtful. She was pondering some deep question. “Papa, when God made the world, did he take the little scraps and make the stars?”

“I was not present, Gladys, dear, so cannot inform you.

Katherine caught the disappointed look upon the child’s eager questioning face, and with sweet motherly tact changed the current of her thought by giving it a new bent.

She had formed the habit of learning helpful little quotations, and often found that they fitted into the everyday need beautifully.



"Gladys, mamma found a sweet thing the other day about a violet. I believe you will like it:

"When God cut holes in heaven  
To let the stars shine through,  
Some little scraps fell down to earth;  
Those little scraps are you."

"O mamma, that's the sweetest thing that I ever read about flowers. Thank you very much," she aded, gravely, pondering the new thought.

Vera's eyes sparkled. "While you are lost in meditation, fancy free, we are ready for the second course."

Noble and Katherine exchanged glances, for where Vera picked up so many apt sayings was astonishing to them, but not to a student of humanity.

The atmosphere these children breathed was one of brightness and refinement. Vera's quick wit and keen mind caught and applied many things which seemed beyond her years, but which was the result of home life, combined with a natural spontaneity that was her mother's legacy, and had become intensified in the child.

"Do our girls ever remind you of Brace and Bruce!" Katherine said, glancing at Noble.

"Very often, Gladys is like Bruce in depth, while Vera is a duplicate of Brace."

"O goody! Am I like Uncle Brace?" Vera adored her young uncle above all others. He was just out of his teens and still the fun loving boy of the family.



"I do wish Uncle Brace would come to see us!"

"Perhaps he will. The letters may tell us. Pet baby, you are not through with your dessert. Will you excuse mamma and let her read her letters?" "Certainly," lisped the darling in the high chair.

Mrs. Trueman had followed her own mother's method of treating her children as politely as she did her guests, and the result was that in spite of the never ceasing spirit of mischief abroad in the home, her children were not rude and intrusive.

Noble settled himself for a good time with his paper. Katherine was deeply engrossed with her letters. Just then the maid came in with a package." I forgot to hand you this with the rest, Mrs. Trueman.

"Thank you, Jane, but try to remember next time, for it might be important."

When the door closed Katherine sighed.

"What is it, dear?" Noble asked.

"I don't want to bore you with such a trifle," lowering her voice as she glanced toward the children, "but I *do* wish I could purchase a remembering machine and inoculate several doses a day. It isn't this, but a dozen times daily, and if I dismiss her, I am flying to evils I know not of."

"I do wish we could find a second edition of your old *Mirando*."

"Don't I! Well, they are simply not procurable, and if they were, there are hundreds ready to snatch them up. I am going to train our girls to be accomplished housekeepers."

"*Home*—not housekeepers. It is a fatal mistake



when girls are accomplished in all lines but that. If there were more real *home-keepers* there would be less divorce cases."

"Divorce! Don't mention it. It makes me fairly shudder when I pick up the daily paper and see the long list. It is simply awful. But look here." She had opened the package and now held up the picture. "Is she not beautiful?"



ERVA



"She has her father's eyes, but the ethereal beauty of her mother," Noble responded.

"Children, come here and see what mamma has to show you."

A scamper to see who would get there first.

"Me see, mamma. O her is the sweetest little tousin I ever saw!" chirped baby Eleanor.

"My darling!" exclaimed Gladys, as she gazed fondly at the picture.

"Mamma, don't she look just like an angel?" queried Vera, admiringly.

"Yes, but she is too healthy to become one very soon, we are happy to say. Listen to what Uncle Phil says: 'We send you Princess Erva's picture. She is rosy and well and we celebrated her third birthday recently by having these taken. She talks everything and grows more lovely every day. Don't you think, Kate, that she has Bruce's deep eyes?'"

"When are you coming, babies and baggage?"

"Hurry up with your vacation, Noble. We are talking of it every day, for although we are the hippest family in the world, it would add to our pleasure to see you instead of doing our talking by proxy.

"You know I detest letter writing. As for telepathy, that may do for separated lovers for a while, but I prefer to do my loving at closer range. A bear hug apiece. Hurry up, now.

"Your wayward brother,

"PHILIP WORTHINGTON."

"O mamma! *do* let's go to Uncle Phil's," pleaded the children.



"I am afraid you will have little peace now, Katherine, with all these urchins clamoring to go. I guess we better plan to go next week."

"O papa! next week is an age! I can never wait that long!" exclaimed impatient Vera.

"Next week," we say, and little dream what even the coming day may bring.

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Noble was detained at his office later than usual the next evening and came home to find no bright welcoming faces at the window.

"What is the matter, Jane? Where are all the folks?"

"O! Mister Trueman, something dreadful has happened and the Missis she's upstairs, nearly beside herself."

Noble sprang up the steps three at a time.

"O Noble! Noble! It's so awful!"

Katherine had wept until she was exhausted.

"Don't, dearest," folding her in his arms, "but do tell me what it is."

She pointed to a telegram on the table.

Noble read it with trembling hands: "Erva Worthington fell from the second-story window and was instantly killed at 10:30 a. m. Come!"

Noble could not speak. This sudden, blinding sorrow which had overtaken his beloved chum was staggering, and no grief but the loss of his mother had ever struck him so keenly. He sank in a chair and buried his face in his hands, while the tears flowed freely.

"Poor Phil, how ever can he bear it!"



The sight of his suffering aroused Katherine. "Dear little Gladys. I must go to the child. It will nearly break her heart."

She put her cheek against Noble's a moment and then flew down the hall in search of her child.

"Where is Gladys?" she asked of Vera, whom she found quietly amusing Eleanor with a most sober look upon her merry face.

"I don't know, mamma; I haven't seen her."

After a prolonged search, mamma found her hidden away in the closet at the end of the hall, the tear stains still visible on her face, for she had sobbed herself to sleep.

"My precious child! I left you alone in your first sorrow," thought Katherine, remorsefully.

She tenderly awakened her and held her quietly in her arms. Neither spoke, but both felt comforted.

Katherine was always a devoted mother, but to-night, as she tucked in her babies, she felt a new gratitude.

"Noble, what shall we do about the children? I do not think we better take them, do you?"

"No; I would have Pearl come and stay with them. You know they will be perfectly safe with her."

"That was my thought, so please telegraph her to-night.

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Next evening, when they arrived at the shadowed house, they were met by Mrs. Worthington, whose strong and sympathetic presence was at such a time invaluable.



"Katherine, I think you can help them more than anyone else. They have not shed a tear, and will not stay away from her. Phil just sits by her casket and strokes her hair, with the most heart-broken look. If only they would break down and weep, they would find relief. I know all about it. Our dear Bernice is nearly crazed with grief, but is so heroic."

Katherine went straight to Phil and put her arms around his neck. He sat there so crushed and dejected that it seemed her sympathetic heart would break to see him thus, and she could not control the flood of tears.

Phil tightened his hand on hers and ere many minutes was weeping, too.

Bernice came softly in and knelt beside him, with a face as white as their beautiful child's.

"My own! My wife! Are you ill!" He took her in his arms. "I have neglected you, Queenie."

"No, no; you never do that, Phil." She nestled like a tired child in his arms.

Katherine crept away, feeling they could comfort each other, now that the fountain of the deep was broken up.

Over and over again every day in the year are such scenes enacted, and we pause with them only because it is a part of life, and we must accept the shadows and learn to live on through them.

Such beautiful spirits as little Erva's are loaned to earth that they may illumine the night and act as guiding stars upon our homeward journey.



In the bloom of radiant health, the fair child unfolded her angel wings, and almost ere they knew it, her bright spirit had passed to breathe its native air, for it never belonged to earth.

Bernice dared not think. She was stupefied by it. A merry romp with her darling after her daily bath, was ensuing. Erva playfully ran from her, saying, gleefully: "You tan't tech me, Love," and climbed into the window. Before her mother could reach her, a nail holding the screen gave way, and the next instant the treasure of their lives lay lifeless upon the pavement.

Bernice stood still with perfect horror, seemingly turned to stone.

But now they are weeping together and peace will come to the overcharged hearts.

"She couldn't have suffered any," Bernice at length found comfort in the thought and whispered it to Phil.

"No, thank God for that."

"She was too beautiful a flower for earth. I always felt it."

"So did I, but I wouldn't tolerate the thought," he answered.

"We will be nobler for having had her this little while, won't we, Phil?"

Phil looked again at their treasure. "Yes, I hope to be, but as for you, Bernice, you could not be more so than you are, and life never, never can be empty if all were taken, while I had you." Phil looked down at her, his fine manly face full of feeling.



She smiled a sad response. "No, it cannot be desolate while we have each other, but how we will miss her!"

The wail of the mother heart broke forth at last, as it has from time immemorial.

It was what Phil needed to arouse him from his own grief.

He took her in his arms and carried her to their room.

"I have been cowardly and weak while she stood by me so heroically," he thought, with remorse.

These scenes of real heart devotion are those which offset the black picture of unhappy marriages.

No disannulling of the wedded vow here.

It is when this type of union is many times multiplied that our national life will become purified. And when men and women in all the glory of their young lives, having wisely chosen, cleave only to each other until the death angel steps between, that there will not be one divorce for every four marriages, appalling and almost unbelievable fact.

Stupendous danger! menacing the most sacred precinct known upon earth, the home life, ruining the happiness of thousands of innocent little ones yearly, blighting these buds of promise and hindering their best development.

Sorrow has invaded this happiest of homes, but Love, who is sorrow's master, will conquer the shadows, and by and by let the light—into which the sweet little life has gone—shine through earth's stained windows.



## CHAPTER XXII.

Mrs. Nance had taken Elsie to her own home until she secured a better place for the girls, establishing them in a respectable home for self-supporting young women. She had also brought them into helpful touch with Mr. Kingsley's work, and they spent their evenings in attendance upon the music and cooking classes. Their teachers had become greatly interested in them. Thus, having found these helpful friends, the current that was fast carrying them out to a dangerous sea, was stayed, and they were developing stronger characters daily.

Mrs. Gilbert mothered the girls at the Settlement and next after Mr. Kingsley, shared the great responsibility. Her heart, which had been left childless, went out to all homeless ones, and she became invaluable to the work. A strong, well balanced woman, she had a most helpful influence over the young people, all of whom felt that in her they had a warm and sympathetic friend to whom they could go with their struggles.

Now, circumstances had called her to a distant state, and she was having a last talk with her friend, who felt the blow of her departure most keenly.

"I do not see any possible way to do without you, Mrs. Gilbert, and you have been like a mother to me. I am almost shorn of strength at the thought."



Mrs. Gilbert felt deepest sympathy for the brave man before her..

"Mr. Kingsley, there is no mountain that will not lift before such a perseverance as yours. You will be victorious, no matter how dark it looks."

"But I shall have no one to talk with who understands the work as you do."

"We are often swept afar by the waves of life, when we would gladly remain near; but if we do our part upon whatever shore we are tossed, some part of humanity will be lifted, will it not?"

They had spoken of whirlpools earlier in the talk and Mr. Kingsley reverted to it now.

"Speaking of whirlpools,,allow me to leave your last question an open one, while I ask you another. 'Why is it, that if some unfortunate bark is upset and the occupant lost, that people are full of commiseration—'How sad! What a dreadful pity!' But if some girl is caught in a whirlpool of life and goes down, the popular verdict is: 'She ought to have known better! I don't pity her at all.' Yet the first was driven by forces which are far easier controlled and avoided than those which lured on the latter. In the capsizing of the boat, the wind and waves were most difficult to contend with, but in the other, the force which weaves its fascinating spell about the unsuspecting is, in many instances, I believe, almost fierce in its dominance of the will, paralyzing all its strength for the time being."

"No, the world cannot, or will not, understand



the one, while they are all compassion for the other," Mrs. Gilbert replied.

Mr. Kingsley continued: "They were gliding along so smoothly with the music of a guitar added to the melody of the human voice. It was moonlight and the scene was enchanting. They rested upon their oars, drifting heedlessly on, and ere they knew it, were hurried over the rapids. How awful! Yet the force that is beguiling the innocent toward the maelstrom of life, is far more dangerous."

"Yes, because more bewitching than music on moonlit water, is love's pleading, more powerful than all the forces of earth, is the influence of will when combined with love's thrilling touch."

"Then, too, Mrs. Gilbert, think of the weak will which is the legacy of many people. Nothing to sustain them in temptation's hour."

"Yes, I often feel that I never dare draw my skirts aside with a 'holier than thou' feeling. I who have a strong will and no temptations along that line."

"But the world sees only the lack of outward conformance to its moral code and draws away in disdain."

Another thing, Mr. Kingsley. The more I study the social life to-day, I become convinced that half of the mistaken marriages are the result of heart hunger. You will pardon me for speaking plainly, but I feel as toward a son and claim the motherly right."



"And most gratefully I acknowledge the same," Mr. Kingsley answered, with true deference.

"When a woman marries unworthily, finding nothing responsive or congenial to her nature, her heart hunger is handed down to her children; but the sad part is that it seldom stops there. Her boy, thus endowed, feels an insatiable thirst for something, a restless, never quelled yearning, and proves an easy prey to the temptations of the wine cup. The daughter comes into life endowed with her mother's finest feelings and unsatisfied desires. She is always groping after the unattainable, full of unrest. So unless her heart is answered by one whose temperament blends with hers, she passes on the unhappy influences by taking one who is absolutely unsuited and incapable of comprehending or responding to her nature, so the woe is multiplied ad infinitum. It makes me tender for humanity, for we little know the influences that were about them from the moment life began. I believe that the heart loneliness of many a splendid wife has been passed down the years and become intensified in her children, until it has led them to do many a deed they would not have thought of, but for the mad desire to stifle the unfathomable something within which is never at rest."

Mr. Kingsley was deeply interested. "You have given me light from a psychological standpoint that is worthy of consideration," he gravely responded. "Your theory may be the clue to the insanity problem as well as other evils. A rest-



lessness allowed to dominate one's reason could easily be driven into madness."

"Yes, and I believe there are just as many insane people outside the asylums as are confined within their precincts."

"Do you know, Mrs. Gilbert, I wish that every mother would talk with her sons as you have with me. They would be much more cautious, and when caught in love's blinding current, I believe many would escape the rapids and reach love's pure haven. I bless you for what you have always been to me, and for these helpful thoughts to-night."

"There is one thing I would urge, and that is, a man of your nobility and stamp should not remain in single misery when there are so many more pure and lovable women adapted to make happy homes than there are men to sustain them. Think of the number of educated young women graduating each year from our higher institutions of learning and the few boys. What does it portend? That the educated womanhood of our country is reaching a higher plane and she must descend from her level or go unwed."

"You think, then, that college girls should only marry University men? I beg to differ with you. I know many fine men who never saw the inside of a University."

"You mistake my thought. I know that is very true. Many a noble man is the one behind the guns, and it is character we must look for. At the same time, my thought holds good. Many boys are dropping out of school at the eighth grade



and have no definite aim in life. They do not rise because they are content to remain mediocre, and while the girls are making more of themselves, does it not follow that there will be too little comprehension of each other?"

"Certainly; that is too authentic to be denied."

"But I am not through with you yet, my friend," smiling at him with a suggestion of mischief in her eyes. "I could leave the work much more easily if you were not to be companionless."

"How can you think me that, when I often long for a moment's solitude?"

"You evade the question well, but it is still before the house, and I am not in favor of referring it back to a committee, for in that case it might be lost."

"Neither will we lay it on the table," said Mr. Kingsley, "but face the issue if we must."

"Well, I have given my opinion and I hope soon to hear that you have acted upon it."

"But how am I to find the incomparable goddess who will preside not only over the realm of this heart, but over this work?"

"You are still fencing, I perceive. I am quite sure that if I told you to follow your inspiration it would not lead you far astray."

"But suppose I have none?"

"Then wait until you do; but that is another side thrust."

Mr. Kingsley was silent for some moments. "Well, Mother Gilbert, suppose, since you are set upon your adopted son's confession, that I have



an inspiration, that there is one person in the world whom I could enthrone in my heart and give the homage of a lifetime. But suppose that insurmountable difficulties lay in the way?"

"I cannot suppose the last state to exist in this case. In the first place, whoever heard of a dauntless man named Kingsley, cowering at the word 'difficulties.' Why, you know that the very thought spurs you on."

"Yes, but a man may have courage to face a cannon, but fail to win in love's battle."

"I really believe you are deficient in manly egotism. You are worthy of the best woman in the land, and I would not leave her so heart lonely that she will take one who is not the true answer to her need."

Mr. Kingsley looked his friend straight in the eyes. "Do you think there is real danger of that?"

"It happens daily. Why should it not in this case?"

A pained look came over his face. Mrs. Gilbert divined it and answered hopefully: "I couldn't go away until I gave you this little warning, but I believe if you do your part, all will be well."

"My part seems to be to stand and wait. I am tied here, while others are free to make calls and take moonlight rides. Besides, I have not wealth and the position I offer is very insignificant in the eyes of the world compared to what another has to bestow."

"Yet your true manhood, without a cent added, outweighs by far all the money and social status



of a certain individual whom we agree shall be nameless."

"Thank you, but he is a gifted, pleasing man, while I am empty handed."

"I tell you, dear boy, you are too modest regarding your own attainments. But I must bid you good-night. I hope to hear that you have followed my advice and put my fears for you at rest. You are wearing out your life in this work and need a counter attraction."

"Good-night. You have read my heart, though I did not think that I wore it upon my sleeve. I would not have it read by the crowd."

"On the contrary, you hide it so deeply that only those accustomed to the study of hearts would guess it."

"Thank you, again, Mrs. Gilbert. Your faith in me is an incentive to struggle on, but I feel that in love's battle I am an unequal contestant."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

"I shall do it; so there!"

"Oh, but Thad, you must not. It isn't good for little boys, and I don't want you to."

"Mamma don't care. She just laughed when I showed her this package," holding up his cigarettes.

"Yes, but I care, and I thought you loved sister."

Thad rushed out of the house without a word, but when he was out of sight he hurled away the box.

Lora turned away with a heavy heart. She went into the library and established herself in one of the great leather chairs. Taking up a book she was soon oblivious of passing events.

The room in which the fair girl sat, was furnished in a rich dark green. Paintings of roses formed the border, and were so natural it seemed the perfume floated down. A few choice masterpieces graced the walls, one especially that was Lora's favorite. A lonely lighthouse with the white-capped waves dashing high upon the rocky fortress, the dark green sea lashed to fury by the tempest, and through the night, a great stream of light touching the watery wilderness. Lora often sat entranced before this picture, and her mother called it one of Lora's weird fancies. For her part, she



could not see how anyone would like that desolate thing. It made her dismal just to glance at it.

Into the greenery of this room Lora often escaped to rest. Is it not because green is the most restful color that the great Artist tinted leaves and grass with it in profusion?

The room was ideal in its furnishings, as was every part of this beautiful home. Absolutely nothing seemed wanting which money and good taste could secure to perfect the appointments of the mansion.

The dining-room opened by sliding glass doors into a beautifully kept conservatory of flowers, where an exquisite white marble statue of Cupid graced the center, while a fountain played musically and formed a miniature waterfall among the rocks and ferns.

Lora's own sanctum was a suite of three rooms, a dainty sitting room with its blue tintings, silken couch and white chairs, a beautiful bedroom, and beyond her dressing room. All were enough to make any art loving maiden in danger of breaking the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's," for love's lavish hand had procured all that could give pleasure and comfort to the only idolized daughter of the home.

Mrs. Alexander's apartments were on a more sumptuous style and formed a perfect setting for her beauty.

Her husband had returned early and felt a hunger for his wife's companionship. He tapped at her door.



"Come in," said a voice of silvery sweetness. "Oh, it's only you, Alex. I did not expect you home so early. Is there anything the matter?"

"No; I have not seen you for so long I thought I would have a little visit."

"That's so. I do not believe I have seen you for several days. But I have been so rushed and tired with two large parties, to say nothing of three afternoon receptions,, all in one week, I just could not get up in time to eat breakfast with you. And when I am going out for the evening you know I have my luncheon sent up here, or else I would have dined with you. Really, Alex, you men ought to be thankful that you are not obliged to go through the constant round of these things."

Mr. Alexander smiled. "But suppose you decline some invitations and give us a little more of your society, Marie. We miss you."

"That is nice. I am glad you do. But you see, Alex dear,—that is, if a man can comprehend these things—society is relentless. I wanted to decline half of these, but I dared not offend Mrs. Upton, who wanted me to help her receive. You know she is connected with royalty and it really was an honor. Then Mrs. Grandalee is going abroad next year and will be presented at court and I would like to send Lora with her; so I must not offend her. And thus it was down the list. There were valid reasons for accepting all of them."

Mr. Alexander had looked surprised when she mentioned sending Lora abroad. The lines about his mouth tightened, but he said nothing.



Mrs. Alexander read him in some moods like an open book. She had long anticipated a struggle upon this point, and concluded it might be as opportune a time as any to continue the subject.

"You know with Mrs. Grandalee, Lora would have every advantage for meeting the titled aristocracy. She is very fond of her and would advance her interests in every way."

It was evident that a storm was brewing from the stern look that came upon Mr. Alexander's face, but he was still silent. So Marie felt she must go on or beat an ignominious retreat.

"You see Mrs. Grandalee, has no daughter and she would find Lora a delightful traveling companion. Lora will be through school by that time and I think it may be one chance of a lifetime to meet the titled heads of Europe. Don't you think so, Alex, dear?" she said coaxingly, seeing that he looked ominously grim.

"Do you want my opinion?"

"Why, certainly. I asked it."

"Well, you think it is a grand thing to have our child go in company with that shallow, artificial woman. That alone would settle it with me. You would send our only daughter over the ocean 'to meet the titled aristocracy,' to 'advance her interests.' In plain English, you mean to marry her to some base old Count, or a rascal of a young Duke!"

Mr. Alexander's face grew fairly black with the thought.

"There! there! Alex. How you do take on over nothing. You men jump at conclusions at the



slightest provocation. I'm sure a man can never feel as a mother does over these things, and I said in the first place you could not understand."

"No, thank heaven, I am glad I cannot. When it comes to turning out a fresh rosebud of a girl into the shallowness and artificiality of the life at court. It will be hard enough for her here, mingling with the four hundred. They take the bloom off of almost any flower after a season or two. If I had my way she should never go out into such society unless under my own protection."

Marie seldom became riled. It was against her policy to do so. Besides, it made wrinkles. But she felt indignant at the disparaging remarks about the society where she shone as a star of the first magnitude.

"Alex, you sound exactly like a domestic tyrant. The very idea of your saying that you would never let Lora go without your protection! Do you expect her to settle down for life with her parents?"

Mr. Alexander heaved a deep sigh. "No, I don't expect her to always remain with us, but she is too pure a pearl to cast before swine, and that is what many mothers are doing who send their daughters abroad to marry some worthless fellow with a high sounding title. You can make your mind up to one thing, Mrs. Alexander. I shall never send my daughter abroad with that woman! We will take her ourselves sometime, but she shall never go unprotected while I am here to guard her."

When Mr. Alexander put his foot down, Marie



never combatted. She detested quarrels, so refrained from adding fuel to the flames by changing the subject.

"I had a letter from Ned to-day. He is having a fine time fishing. He was wanting money."

Mr. Alexander's face did not lighten. "Money! What does he want of money? I pay all his bills and supply him with plenty of cash. It's those confounded cigarettes he wants it for, and I shall not send him another cent until time to come home. I tell you, Marie, you are ruining that boy, allowing him to stop school. Whoever heard of anything so absurd, a boy in his position!"

"Well, it's no use to make him go to school when he won't study. For my part, it's a relief to my mind to have him out of school, for the teachers found so much fault with him, poor dear! It discouraged him."

Ned was Marie's pet and she had indulged him to his ruin.

"I tell you, Marie, if he stops school he will be worse yet, and end up as a loafer. Cigarettes are dulling his intellect to such an extent, he will be incapable of anything after awhile. If you would only use your influence against it, there would be some hope, but he is beyond my control now."

A beautiful chime of bells announced the dinner hour.

Mr. Alexander gave Marie his arm and they passed down stairs together, a superb looking couple, but alas! Mr. Alexander would have exchanged



all he possessed for a rose covered cottage and a loving wife to welcome him home.

Married? No, no. Wedded? Never. The form only remained, the heart, the life of the holy bond had ceased.

Envy not the glitter and equipage of wealth, husband and wife, if you have heart satisfaction, for you have riches greater than gems in ocean bed. Be content, for you have all the best of life.

True love inhabits many an abode of wealth, but to deem that all of those surrounded by earthly honors are happy, is an erroneous view that obtains with many young people who would otherwise be content.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

Mr. Alexander needed a trustworthy boy, and thinking that if a lad had pluck enough to attend night school after working all day, that there must be something in him, he sent in an application.

The Professor looked over his glasses thoughtfully a moment. "Marshall Allen is the chap."

"See here, Allen, is a good thing for you."

Marshall's eyes beamed. "What do you suppose it is?" His experience with city life had made him rightfully cautious.

"It is an opportunity to get in with one of the leading bankers of the city."

The next day found Marshall at Mr. Alexander's office and he felt his keen eyes read him through and through.

"Your name and age, my boy?"

Marshall informed him.

"What salary are you receiving?"

"Forty dollars per month and chance of promotion shortly."

"I will give you forty-five and you will please begin your duties to-morrow."

Marshall's face lit up, then he grew thoughtful.

"But, Mr. Alexander, I am not sure that I can leave the firm so suddenly. They have entrusted me with some special work."



"But what does that matter to you?" said Mr. Alexander, sounding the boy's motive and growing more pleased with him each moment.

Marshall hesitated. He feared to lose this wonderful opportunity, yet he must be true to his trust. He drew himself up proudly. "I was trusted and I must not betray it."

"You are all right. Now please give notice that as soon as you finish that important business—Mr. Alexander's eyes twinkled—with the firm, you are to report to me. How long will it be?"

"About a week, sir."

"All right. I shall depend upon you. Good-day."

Marshall's head was fairly dizzy with excitement. Forty-five dollars per month! And to be in the employment of such a fine man as he felt Mr. Alexander to be. He almost ran back to the store, at once went to the office and gave notice of his departure at the end of the week.

"What's this?" asked Mr. White, sharply.

Marshall related the story to him.

"But we cannot spare you, my boy. I intended to promote you next month, but will do it now. I knew some other fellow would have his eyes upon you; but this won't do. I cannot afford to do without you. I will give you forty-five and you stay."

"I am very sorry, Mr. White, but I cannot do it."

"Why not, I'd like to know?" said the gentleman, becoming riled.

"Because I promised to take the place and he said that he would depend upon me."



"You do well to adhere to your promises, and while it grieves me to part with you, I must not stand in the way of your advancement, for it will come if you continue to stick to principles."

Marshall went out of the office with hope singing in his heart, "Success is certain! Mother was right. It pays to be honest and peg away. I am not sorry I left those fellows who were bound to drag me down, and I am mighty thankful that I did not lower my standard and get rich too quickly by going in with those men. I wish boys knew when they reached such places that not to yield the first time is often their only safety. I believe if I had, I would have been so humiliated I could never have looked mother in the eyes again."

Mr. Alexander thought of Marshall several times on his homeward trip. "I am greatly attracted to that boy. He has the making of a man in him. I wish Ned was as promising, and as for little Thad, it is hard to tell how he will turn out. He is full of good impulses and has noble traits, but he needs careful training, and except for Lora where will he get it?"

Thad saw the carriage turning up the driveway and flew to meet it.

"Hurrah, papa! I was just dying to see you, 'cause Harry Maine has a gun, a really gun. Not that shoots rubber balls, but truly shoots! His father brought it to him when he came home from his trip, and Harry made me mad. He said you wouldn't get me one. I told him I knew better, and I saw you coming and I thought I'd tell you



about it. When can I have it, papa? It will be more splendid than his, won't it? Say! his is a single blarrel breech loader, gauge number twelve. I found out all about it. So you get me a number thirteen and that will be a little better. When can I have it, papa?"

Thad had poured forth this volley of talk as rapidly as his glib little tongue could rattle it off. Such a roguish winning boy as he was. Every one found it hard to resist his appeals.

Mr. Alexander had long contested this point with his boy. Thad, the animated, balanced himself on the carriage step and performed some tumbles almost before he was out.

"Papa, 'member about the gun, won't you? A—"

"Listen, Thad. I haven't promised to get you the gun until you are older," Mr. Alexander put his arm around the boy as they sat on the porch steps, "but we will talk it over. I might make a bargain with you. Do you know, Thad, I am going to depend upon you to grow up to be a good man and take my place in business?"

Thad looked thoughtful. "Are you, really, papa?"

"Yes, and I want you to begin now to be a man, so after a while I can trust you not only with a gun, but with my business."

Thad had never been so much impressed before.

"I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will promise to let cigarettes alone and be my little man that I can depend upon for a whole year, I will get you



the finest gun ever made, or have one made expressly for you that will beat Harry's all to pieces."

"I'll do it, papa, but a year is an awful long time, isn't it?"



THAD

"Yes, but when you get it you will be glad you waited."

"All right. That's a go!"

"Suppose we shake hands on that. Men of busi-



ness often do and you are going to be my right hand man now."

"You bet I am! Here, papa. Shake both hands. When you need me just call upon me at any time and I will help you out."

Thad's eyes shone. He threw his cap high in the air and caught it deftly.

"All right, my boy, we are going into partnership."

"Say, papa. Couldn't you let me begin right away to help you at the bank?"

"Of course, I'll find something for you to do. Call around next Saturday and we'll talk the matter over."

"I'm your man. I'll be there!" said the boy, feeling two inches taller.

Mr. Alexander passed into the house feeling quite light hearted. "I believe I have struck the right chord for him." The thought of Marshall Allen brightened him still more.

\* \* \* \*

Two weeks passed and Marshall had already given his employer great satisfaction.

Perhaps the thing that pleased Marshall the most was the fact that Mr. Alexander had given his young son into his care, and made him feel that he expected him to become an inspiration to the small boy.

Marshall resolved to be worthy of the trust. His heart warmed toward the child, not only because of his attractiveness, but because of a small brother he had at home.



"Papa, Marshall is the nicest boy that ever lived! I wish I could stay down at the bank with him all the time."

"But if you do not go to school you cannot be my partner, you know."

"That's so. Say, papa, a year is a terrible time coming."

"Yes, but you will be so busy helping Marshall that it will pass before you know it."

"Papa, Lora is awful pleased because you and I are going into business, and because I don't smoke cigarettes." He climbed to father's knee. "I never did like them, any way, but the boys all did it, so I tried to," he rather sheepishly admitted. "Marshall never touches one. I saw a man offer him some and he said, 'No, thank you, sir; I never smoke.'"

"I knew it!" exclaimed Mr. Alexander, much pleased.

Mr. Alexander looked younger the last few weeks. He had hopes of Thad, and that burden was rolling away.

"Thad is doing splendidly, Lora, and we'll be proud of him yet."

"I believe so, too, papa, and I have heard you and Thad praise the new boy so much, I have quite a desire to see him."

"He is a fine boy all right, and if only for the wholesome influence he has over Thad, I would not part with him for anything."

Mr. Alexander was feeling happy to-night. Lora rejoiced, although for herself she felt questioning



and restless, but she would not let him know it, so she seated herself at the piano and played her gayest airs, and the man of many cares forgot them all and was for the time being happy.

"Sing to me, Lora."

"What shall it be, papa?"

"Anything that suits you, dear."

She wanted something to still the inward restlessness and surprised her father by singing "The Holy City," for it had fascinated her ever since Muriel had gone.

Her father said nothing at the conclusion, but there was a moisture in his eyes.

Lora turned around. "Shall I stop?"

"No, no. Go on."

At the Robbins home one day she had heard the girls sing that sweet, restful song, "Just for To-day." She had learned it and sang it now with true expression.

"Lord, for tomorrow and its needs, I dare not pray,  
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord, just for  
to-day."

As the sweet voice sang on, a picture of the noble speaker who had so charmed him arose again, and he heard the words: "If any man will open the the door, I will come in." As he passed up stairs a little later to his room, he heard very clearly, "It is as easy as opening the door of your room. If any man will open the door, I will come in." As he sank to rest, the words were the last that he remembered.



## CHAPTER XXV.

Dorothy, the merry, was having a girlish chat with her friend Eldah, who admired her wit and brightness exceedingly; but to Eldah, to the world in general, and most of all to herself, did Dorothy seem a puzzle. This complexity in her prevented the closest friendship. Possibly Eldah saw under the surface more than anyone else. Still she could not read her friend's depths.

"Dorothea, I wish I could understand you!"

"It is mutual aspiration, my dear lady," responded the ever fluent girl, with a longing in her tone.

Eldah, being intuitive, caught it. "Why, Dorothy, I did not supposed you ever cared. I thought you just delighted in being an enigma and sufficient unto yourself."

Dorothy, with the contrariness of her nature, showed exactly the opposite trait from what she desired. In reality she yearned for comprehension on the part of her friends. Still, with what seemed a fatal perversity, when she might have had it, she thwarted all by lapsing outwardly into proud indifference, saying: "I am self-sufficient!" Although at that very moment she longed with all the intensity of her life to have Eldah look behind the



laughing light in her eyes and know that she had depths that matched Eldah's own.

"Well, I sometimes envy you your strength and sufficiency, Dorothea." She looked admiringly at the queenly girl before her.

"You need not. It is often a farce."

"Then you play the part admirably."

Dorothy's eyelids drooped and veiled her expressive face, while she adroitly changed the subject, although in her inmost heart she wished Eldah would continue it, so strange a compound was this English Rose.

"Well, I am on the extreme precipice of danger, Eldahrema, and unless you rescue me, my curiosity will be the extermination of the worthy editor of the Newtonian Star, and, alas, none but yourself can be held responsible, and who, I repeat it, who will fill the vacancy made by the untimely demise of yours truly? Alas! Who will thrill, awe, and stir with burning eloquence the unsophisticated freshmen and—"

"O Dorothy! Spare me any more such flights, for I really want to have a serious talk with you about little Marion."

"Another slumite protege of yours? I beg to be excused. My fort does not lie with the submerged tenth. Instead, I must sharpen the intellects of the—"

"O Dorothy! You are irrepressible. Will you not be good just five minutes and give me the benefit of your intellectual vigor?"

"It is thine gratuitously, fair maiden. I would



scorn not to fly to your assistance at any time, be it in Slumdom or where the waves 'break! break! break! on thy cold gray stones, O sea!' "

"But how can I sober you sufficiently and get you silent long enough to impart the story?"

"Proceed! I promise the most filial obedience for two minutes, which is the extreme limit of my powers of endurance." Dorothy put on her most demure look, as she meekly folded her hands upon her breast.

Eldah told little Marion's story, and what she knew of Hattie's history.

Dorothy's face betrayed keen interest, and one gifted with insight would have read how deeply it touched the large-hearted girl. Still, with the strange inconsistency of her make-up, she expressed not a word. Some one has said: "When the well is deep there is nothing to draw with."

Eldah felt her unspoken interest, but wished she would voice it.

"Well, what is your opinion?" she questioned, at last.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Miss Dorothy, tossing her head on purpose to hide the moisture that sprang to her eyes, "I cannot worry myself into wrinkles over other people's troubles. For my part, I mean to have a good time."

"Dorothy Dix! Turn around here and look me in the eyes! You do care and you do not mean a word of that heartless speech."

Dorothea stood erect and smiling as she replied: "Now, I like that! I'm glad to have somebody give



one the benefit of the doubt and not to think I am always so heartless as I sound."

"I know you better than that," Eldah responded; "but tell me what shall we do for Marion?" Well knowing that if she could enlist the brilliant girl before her, the rest would follow.

Dorothy was not drawn to settlement work and wondered how Eldah could devote so much time to it. Still she had a very warm heart, although she hid it so often as to sometimes be thought quite the reverse. She was very fond of children, to whom alone she was lavish in her expressions of devotion. So much so, that some of her friends, as well as admirers of the opposite sex, often wished they might win such smiles as she bestowed upon the little ones.

"What shall we do with Marion?" Dorothea repeated, looking thoughtful. "I think your plan feasible. It quite appeals to my reason, and it is my candid judgment—that if we can win Myrtelius, the rest will come. Suppose we emigrate and discuss the problem with her ere the afternoon meeting of the Delta's."

"Agreed!"

A few minutes brisk walk brought them to the Ladies' Hall, where Myrtelius was domiciled. As we have but mentioned her, an introduction may be pleasing. She was regarded as one of the strongest characters in school, not only morally, but intellectually, she was very forceful, and her high rank in scholarship had secured the respect of pupils and teachers. For the last two years she had acted



as tutor while carrying her own heavy studies, thus proving a very capable and dependable girl.

The three were friends, although so totally diverse. The students had dubbed them "The Triplets," which can be appreciated only upon further acquaintance.

Myrtelius, the studious, whose bright eyes and good forehead revealed her intellectual vigor, was about medium height and weight. Eldah, of a slender, delicate build, while Dorothea, of commanding height and fine physique, was a decided contrast. Totally unlike in their natures, still there was a sympathetic bond and stronger link than mere Delta affinity.

Myrtelius was deep into chemistry and did not relish the intrusion, for she had absolutely no inclination for charity work; but it was a rule of her life never to fail a friend. So when the three separated it was with the tacit understanding to win over the rest.

"Myrtelius is never enthused over such work, but she will stand by us."

"What do you say to bringing our Marion home with you and let us see her," suggested Dorothea, who was already impatient to behold the child

"Certainly. She will win the girls. I will bring her out to our next meeting."

Eldah's pretty home was approached through very beautiful grounds. Stately firs and ancient oaks were profuse. At the rear of the dwelling a large tent graced the lawn, where all through the summer the family enjoyed outdoor life. The per-



fect arching of the trees making a fine canopy, under which was placed a table and rustic chairs, while four comfortable hammocks beckoned invitingly.

In this delightful retreat, hidden from the public by foliage, the Delta meetings frequently convened.

To-day, as usual, a very spirited time ensued.

"Horrors!" exclaimed a fastidious maiden. "Eldah Homesworth, you've reached the limit. Adopt a slum child indeed!"

"Who ever heard of so wild a scheme?" commented others.

Nevertheless, after an animated discussion, Eldah carried her point, seconded by Dorothea and sustained firmly by Myrtelius.

After other business was disposed of, a lively social time followed, during which Eldah came in for her share of teasing.

"I see! I see!" exclaimed Geraldine. "How could we expect anything else, after those morning rambles out at camp. We might have anticipated the outcome."

"Does it just dawn upon thy darkened vision, mine friends? Why, I prophesy this is but the beginning of our woes, and that ere we are aware, Eldah will plump down a whole orphan asylum on our hands," said Dorothy, unable longer to resist joining in the fun.

"If you do, Eldahrema, I will wash my hands of the whole affair," added Myrtelius.

"Girls, let us vote to stand by Mr. Richmond and do all in our power to promote his interests, or I



am morally sure our charming president will yet have us confirmed settlement workers, or deaconesses. Then think of the blighting of all our matrimonial prospects," said Geraldine.

"Girls, if you do not behave I shall resign the presidency on the spot."

Eldah cast a reproachful glance at Dorothea, who instantly silenced the girls by a look of reproof. The meeting closed after singing merrily, "Posedon and the Pine Tree," and the Delta, Delta, Delta, had become the first to go upon record as interested in philanthropic measures.

Eldah maintained a dignified silence when left alone with Myrtelius.

"When are we going to take charge of our ward?" asked Myrtelius, with an assumed interest.

"Whenever circumstances demand it."

Myrtelius hurried away to her intellectual duties, thinking: "I wonder which it will be? I certainly hope Mr. Richmond, for she is too fine a girl to waste her life on such poor white trash as are down in the slums."



## CHAPTER XXVI.

Eldah's father and mother had long held professorships in the college of their native town,—which was one of the most beautiful suburbs of a large eastern city—and were in every sense people of culture.

It was but natural that they desired their only daughter to grace a beautiful home of her own, therefore, as Mr. Richmond became more attentive, they encouraged what seemed to them a most advantageous marriage.

Eldah was deeply interested in Settlement work and found it more fascinating than ever. The talks with Mr. Kingsley were becoming more frequent and they found it necessary to consult together, not only regarding the Delta ward, but many other topics.

Eldah always found these talks a tonic. Still, Mr. Richmond was obtaining an influence over her, and unconsciously she was coming more under his spell.

She did not stop to analyze her feelings, but was beginning to feel the power of his admiration, and it made her, for the time being, happy. She would not have been a woman, and remained insensible to the pleasure of having so handsome and gallant a gentleman ready to anticipate her slightest wish.



She knew that many envied her, and that of itself deepened the fascination. Yet little did she heed how she was drifting out upon a treacherous sea.

Mr. Richmond had refrained with hero-like composure from uttering the words which might end all those pleasant talks and drives; but coming in one evening and finding Eldah alone, looking the embodiment of winsome womanhood, in her simple white dress, he felt an irresistible impulse, he could curb himself no longer, and ere he fully realized it, the fateful and perhaps fatal words were uttered beyond recall.

Never had Eldah been so restless as during the last few days. She had not known what ailed her, but something had disquieted her to the point of positive unhappiness.

She was dazed as she listened to the ardent avowal. It sounded like a fairy tale. Could it be such happiness was for her? What more could woman desire? She felt a new warmth stealing over her, the magnetism of his great love was beginning to hold her spellbound. Suddenly she became conscious that her heart had been hungry and cold, for now, standing under the light of such love, she felt for the moment warmed and fed.

It enveloped her, the wonderful love light that came from his eloquent eyes. Why should she resist it? Who would?

They walked out to the rustic seat under the trees.

A moment throbbing with sweet peril! Will Eldah, our deep, earnest souled girl, take the fatal



step that will lead her from higher things? Will she be content without a depth that calleth unto her own depth of character?

Eldah is heart-tired to-night and face to face for the first time with such a crisis. A sense of protection—so dear to womanhood—comes over her, and it all seems a witching tale.

“Why not?” she asked herself. But with strong common sense said: “I must have time to consider so weighty a matter, Mr. Richmond, for some one has well said ‘that colors seen by candlelight, do not look the same by day.’”

But feeling his only hope might be in present decision, and knowing that he possessed unusual power over her to-night, he resolved to urge the question to a final issue.

Never had he looked so handsome. Nature, too, wore a subdued and softened air, and as he painted glowingly their wedding trip to the Old World, talked of their gliding down the far famed Rhine on moonlight nights like the present, who—especially one who loved study and culture as Eldah—would not have found the prospect alluring?

The old, old story, always full of beauty and power, the spell of it, can she resist?

Yes, she is strong enough, but does not realize her danger and knows not she is capable of deeper joy than she is experiencing.

Eldah had lived a strong, pure life and given little thought to the sentimental side. She had found much strength and happiness in her friendship with Mr. Kingsley, but had always put down



girlish dreams concerning the opposite sex, resolutely maintaining that she would not allow herself to care deeply for any man until she knew he cared for her. She knew Mr. Kingsley valued her highly, and it made her strangely, deeply happy; but theirs was only an exalted friendship. If it had been more, he would have told her so in their frequent talks.

Eldah loved Emerson's thought: "My life is not an apology, but a life. I wish to make it sound and sweet,—it shall be an alms, a battle, a conquest, a medicine." Thus she had put sentiment aside.

But now she is face to face with a man who is ardently in love with her, and for the time being it seems sufficient to satisfy. Why should it not prove enough always?

Is this gifted girl an isolated factor, or are there not many Eldahs, who, under love's eloquent pleading—and in moments of longing for their real soul twin—take a lesser gift, when a greater may be reserved for them?

"So you would have us all remain on the stem until we are withered roses!" methinks a blooming girl exclaims.

Not so, sweet flower; but in the name of all that is holy, be as sure as it is possible to be, that the depths of your nature are satisfied, or "fear to call loving."

"Deep calleth unto deep" in friendship. How much more in this most exalted of all human relationships.



The hours had flown on wings, the parting time had come. Eldah walked into the house slowly, with a very sober expression. When in her room she went to the window and watched her lover going down the walk.

Was her heart throbbing with a new and almost unsupportable joy?

No, but she was happy. It was like a beautiful dream, this wonderful rose tinted future that was to be hers.

All night she dreamed of wandering under the blue skies of Italy and haunting the art studios of Rome. Some way the thought of these seemed to supercede her lover. Still he was present to her thought, smiling and handsome.

She felt the delight of her parents and friends. Yes, it must be the right thing! How could it be otherwise?

Thus it has been, and will be, until time shall be no more.

Why paint such disappointing scenes upon life's canvas? Because in a study in life tints, the true artist gives not only the high lights, and some souls standing upon the perilous threshold, may be led to pause, ere they make the fatal mistake.

In a few weeks the secret was out, and a superb flash of light radiated with every movement of Eldah's hand.

If the shining ones who guard us weep over the mistakes of poor earth-blinded humanity, certainly one involving so much, must cause them deepest sorrow.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

One of the most fascinating things in life is its constant shifting of scenes.

A perfect storm of events that seems ready to submerge and overturn our entire existence is suddenly quelled, the waves recede, and some unexpected good comes in view, often ere our eyes are cleared from tears to behold the vision.

Life is linked to life in one mysterious network of threads. They break off and the ends seem hopelessly lost, but at an opportune moment they are united, and who shall dare question that it is accomplished by a Divinity who shapes our ends?

Many years ago two girl cousins traveled the same path through the woods to the little red school house, studied out of the same book and were inseparable companions.

Strong fetters are those formed in early childhood, and while dearer friendships may supercede, there is ever a tenderness and heart turning toward those who were with us in the dawn of life, ere our feet have traveled far, and in the din and turmoil of earth, lost the glory that hovers about childhood.

Nelle was much surprised one evening to find a caller awaiting her in the reception room.

A tall lady with dark eyes greeted her cordially.



No one could distrust the kind face, and her warm hand clasp told Nelle more than words could have done, that she had found a friend.

A brief talk brought out the joyful news that she was a long lost and much beloved cousin of Nelle's mother.

With delight Nelle listened to reminiscences of of her mother's girlhood days, and was overjoyed to find that her new friend had been to her employer, secured a two weeks' leave of absence and intended to take her to the country.

She embraced her friend with all the ardor of a child, and in two days was far away from the smoke and noise of the city, wading knee deep in flowers, rivaling the birds with outbursts of song, and so care free and happy, that all the lonely years of life were forgotten.

Her cousin rejoiced to see the change in one short week.

"Why, Nelle!" exclaimed her boy cousin, as he came in and heard her singing merrily over the dishes, "I wouldn't have guessed this was the girl I met at the station a week ago."

"It is just like steam escaping. It makes a tremendous noise when it has been pent up a long time, and I feel as free as the birds out here, and just running over with happiness!"

Nelle gave the motherly woman in the doorway an old-fashioned hug, which was as warmly returned.

"If only Elsie could be here, my joy would be complete."



"We will see what can be done for Elsie after a little, but now I want you to get strong and rosy. Go with Max and help him pick up apples, when you finish the dishes."

"The birdies warble blithely, for my Father made them so," trilled out Nelle. "He is my Father, too, for He rescued me from loneliness and brought me out here. Why, if I had died and gone to heaven, it couldn't have seemed more like paradise."

"What are you thinking of, Cousin Nelle?" asked the boy at her side, noting her sudden silence.

"I was thinking that God made the country, and man the town, and I wish I could always stay out here with God."

She said it earnestly, for Nelle's experiences had made a deep impression upon her.

"I am sure we never want you to go," said Max, who had hungered all his life for a sister.

"Max, you seem just like a brother to me. I like you best of any boy I know," she said frankly.

"I'm not anything to brag on," honest Max responded, "but really, Cousin Nelle, the girls and fellows around here tire me awfully."

"I supposed that everyone in the country was good like you and auntie." She had changed the cousin into a closer relation. She said it was not near enough.

"Oh, there are plenty of good people and nice young folks, but I haven't found anyone like a sister before."

"You wouldn't expect it," Nelle said innocently.



"You see, we are really blood relatives. Isn't that splendid? O, it feels so good to belong to some nice people."

"Nelle, you are the most appreciative girl I know."

"When the girls at the store used to tell of their aunts and cousins, I wished I had just one relative, and now I have *two!*"

Max climbed the tree and began to pelt her with



NELLE AND MAX



apples. A merry hour they spent working and playing, and when auntie came out a little later she found bags and baskets filled, and two jolly looking people sitting on the fence, eating apples and counting seeds..

"Here is a letter for you, Nelle, and we will leave her to enjoy it in solitude, Max. I always like to be alone with my letters."

They had not gone far when a light step overtook them.

"O Auntie Wymen! Just listen to what Elsie says. The most splendid thing has happened her, too. Just three days ago after I came here, when Elsie was in the depths of loneliness, a pretty young married woman called at the home and asked to see her. She wanted some one to be with the children, and, come to find out, she is the daughter of Mrs. Worthington, (whom I told you of), who will always seem like an angel of light to Elsie. The daughter's name is Mrs. Trueman, and she has three of the dearest little girls. Just hear what Elsie says: 'I never was in such a home, and if I had been told that such existed, I should have doubted it.'"

It isn't grand, just pretty, and a real home. Why, they are so polite and nice to one another, it's like company all the time. I never shall feel lonely again with such people for my friends.

Mrs. Trueman knows that I worship her mother—for I always shall—Nelle, God sent her, and I could kiss the hem of her garment. So I am more than glad to do anything I can for her daughter.



There's not many fine men like Mr. Trueman. His name just fits, and I could write a whole letter about each of the children. They are the dearest and worst little rascals ever lived. They go to Sunday school and come home and act out the lesson. You know last week it was about Joseph and his coat of many colors. Gladys' remarks explaining it all to baby Eleanor, were too funny. 'So you will understand it, Eleanor, we will show you just how they did it.' I was in the next room sewing, so I just kept still to see what they would do. 'Now, you are Joseph, because you are the littlest. We are your wicked brothers—just wait a minute.' Gladys darted up to the attic and down again. I heard a queer noise. 'Tear off some more cloth, Vera, it isn't long enough.' I went in to investigate just as the two were lowering Joseph into the pit, that is, down the shaft for the dumb waiter. 'Don't be afraid, little Joseph,' Vera exclaimed. 'We won't let you fall.' I reached them in time to rescue Joseph as he was half way down to the pit, and that blessed baby wasn't crying a bit, such was her faith in her wicked brothers.

"Why, children! Don't you know you might drop the baby and hurt her dreadfully?" I said, as I pulled Joseph up.

'No, indeed! Miss Elsie. We ain't the dropping kind, for, you see, we *love* our little Joseph, and they hated theirs," Vera explained. 'Yes, but you might be pulled over yourselves and get badly hurt,' I answered. 'O no! God wouldn't let us. He 'tends



to us all the time,' Gladys remarked. 'Don't He, Vera?'

'Well, yes, when He isn't busy about other things. He has a terrible lot of business to see to. I 'spose He might be called out.'

'No, He mightn't,' Gladys replied, opening her big blue eyes very wide and looking like a cherub. 'You see, God always 'tends to the children anyway. The Bible says so.'

"That's just a sample of the way those youngsters perform *all* the time; but they are such a mixture of fun, naughtiness, and goodness, that you love them in spite of everything. If you are as happy as I am, I shall be thankful."

'God gives at last!'

There had seemed no turn in the road these lovable young girls had to travel. Just an unceasing grind. But when they least expected it, the path curved, and led them into healthful, happy, atmospheres.

*'God gives at last!'*

Art thou in the shadows or monotony of life?

Above thy irksome task an angel sings. Listen! The refrain is soft and sweet, but very clear: "*God gives at last!* 'And they shall never be ashamed who wait for me.'"



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Out yonder upon the heights is a blue veil of mist. It is clearing here, but the haze lingers over the foothills. Just so our eyes are blinded by earth mists, that we see truth but dimly. Reality! reality! Let me know and grasp its meaning. Which is worth while, to make a living or to make a life?”

Eldahrema was standing before her window soliloquizing thus. She pondered the last question deeply, and then continued: “Those heights are everlastingly green. They make me think of the evergreen mountains of life, ‘God’s heights of power,’ I call them. They seem beckoning me on to higher things, and the old question that has throbbed within my being so much of late, stirs again. Which is best, to make a living—that is, accept of a high position that ensures sumptuous living every day—or day by day to build a life?”

“A life, a life,” deep within a voice seems to say.

Eldah turned sadly away. “God’s world and I am in it, a part of His wonderful plan. If I am not heroic in my part, some other life will find it harder to be noble. I must be brave and stand in my place or some other will be thrown down by my lack of fortitude. Knowing that, I see no way but to go through my part up to my best light.



Over behind the hills the sun is setting. Yet all we get of it is a line of light gilding the top. Not much, but a hint of glory. So all any soul can get from me, is a suggestion of what is possible for a life that looks upward for guidance."

Stern resolve was written upon Eldah's face as she said: "I will not play at living, but fulfill my part in the great drama of life."

As she turned from the window, a ray of light touched the beautiful gem upon her hand and it flashed out a bewildering radiance of beauty. It was fascinating to watch the play of light and shade, but a pained look shadowed her thoughtful brow.

Something strangely disquieted her. She put her hands behind her as if to shut out the witching spell of the ring.

Just then the bell rang and a moment later Dorothea entered.

Eldah hailed her with more warmth than usual, although she was always fond of the bright girl's company. Now she seemed glad to escape from herself.

"Dorothy, you are an antidote to every kind of downheartedness; but don't you ever go down in the valley?"

The young lady stood before her radiant with good health and superabundant spirits.

"Eldah, I thought you were endowed with more penetration than the average."

"Well, you always look so blooming and appear



overflowing with brightness, that we think you must feel superb."

A wistfulness crept into Dorothea's eyes, but she instantly covered it up with a merry look, as she exclaimed: "Me! have the dumps? I am not built upon that plan. 'Laugh and the world laughs with you.' That's the principle I go on. I'll never wear my heart in sight and have the world in general commiserating me. I cannot bear pity. When I weep, I prefer to 'weep alone,' even if the poet did object. I do not want people trotting around me with handkerchiefs held to their eyes when I feel badly. If I had anything that demanded wholesale weeping, I would invite all my friends to come and bring their towels and we would make a regular time of it. Pity makes me furious. I act hateful then, and wouldn't tell a soul how I felt, especially if they preface their remarks with: 'Poor child!' in a sort of dying away tone."

Eldah smiled, but she looked right down through the laughing eyes before her. "But you like genuine sympathy and you need not deny it."

The lively girl gave an appreciative glance, then subsided into her old indifference.

How near are souls often, when a word would bring them into helpful converse. Each girl was fighting her own battle, little dreaming of the other's struggles, yet feeling a desire for closer comprehension.

"You always do me good, Dorothy, and I think you are a—"



"Benediction to mankind!" finished the lively maiden.

"Yes, you are. We need just wholesale—"

"Wholesale chatterboxes!" added Dorothy.

"Dorothea Madeline Maddox, you do not deserve any compliments. You stop me right in the middle, and act as if it were a matter of supreme indifference to your Royal Highness; but all the same you like it, and I am going to keep right on telling you what I feel."

"Approach cautiously the sacred realm of my cranium, Eldahrema, lest you stir the dormant seeds of vanity till they grow to lusty plants."

Dorothy had heard of Eldah's engagement with positive distress.

She could not congratulate her, for she did not believe Eldah was happy, although all the girls had greeted her opinion with scorn. "Not happy with handsome Mr. Richmond!" "Going abroad for her wedding trip." "Everything a girl could want her whole life!" they had exclaimed.

Eldah had accepted the congratulations of all the rest with becoming dignity. She was not surprised at Dorothy's silence, for she never did things in the conventional way. The unexpectedness of her nature—its very caprices—was one of her greatest charms.

Dorothy began in a somewhat circuitous way to lead up to the subject.

"I do not believe in love," Eldah.

"There is another thing that is inconsistent with



your make up. You are admirably fitted for it and I hope some time you will—”

“O pardon me! but I cannot endure the mental picture. Fact is, I do *not* believe in it. It is all a farce. There is nothing higher than friendship.”

A wave of color flushed Eldah's face, and her eyes shone. “All a farce. Nothing higher than friendship! Why, love is life, the whole best of life. You are entirely uninitiated yet, dear girl, or you would never make such erroneous statements.”

“I am prepared to support them,” replied Dorothy, looking resolute and grim.

“Your funny mixture, Dorothy Dix!”

“I know it. I'm a riddle that I cannot solve, but *you* do not believe in love, Eldah.”

“I do not believe in the holiest thing on earth? You know me better, surely.”

“No, candidly, I do not think you really believe in it.”

“Why?” was on Eldah's lips, but she half caught her friend's meaning and checked herself in time.

Dorothea began to put on her gloves. “I do not think you would go against your deepest woman's feelings, so I am convinced that you do not believe in love.”

This serious thrust from the merriest one of all their set.

Eldah's face clouded as her friend passed out. It had been but a momentary brightness. Now she felt the shadows deepening within her, as well as in the room.

“She did not congratulate me. She repulsed me.



This from Dorothea. But I must hurry and dress, for Mr. Richmond is coming to dinner. 'Believe in love!' *Of course I do!*" Eldah determinedly murmured, as if to silence a voice within, a voice that questioned her too closely. At last it gained her attention. "If you believed in love, would you marry Mr. Richmond?"

Eldah put her hands over her ears. "*Be gone!*" she commanded, for it seemed sacrilege to listen to such thoughts. "I love my promised husband. Of course I do!" she maintained.

With which she dismissed the subject, and soon forgot her restlessness, likewise her high thoughts, in the pleasant home circle below.

Full of peril are moments like these, when we turn away from our guiding monitor and close our ears to its warning voice. Well for us that it does not cease until many times it has plead with us to follow its leadings.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

Thad was developing in many ways that pleased those who loved him best.

His letter to his brother will afford a glimpse of the little fellow's aspirations.

"Dear Ned:

"i sung Pull for the shor last nite when I wuz going too bed, Lora sed, Wut u singin that fore? And i ced—too keep mi kurage up.

"Due you want tu no wy? Pa ced it won't bee a year for a long time yet, an I kant have mi gun til a year, Lora ced wite to Ned, and make him laff. i can speal good cant i? Sum words kum easy and sum kum hard, Sum fall rite on the paper, Lora tole me how to speal a few, i rite bekaus u must feel bad to be gone so long.—Lora is spealing sum words now, but she sez she kan't speal every one, I must think fur mi self, i am thinkin hard, but they get stuk in mi hed an kant get out, Lora ced yu will like it enyhow. Ma wants u to kum home. I am workin with Marshall Allen every day after skul, i earned 1 dolor last week, an if i am spaired mi health, pa sez, and if i kin keep my kurage up, to work rite along—he thinks I'll get the gun, Pa sez he kneads me to help him, i don't smoke cigarettes eny more beekaus they're



bad. Wy due you? Marshall don't at all, he and i don't scrap like you and i du. Ma sez, Dear boy, bless his hart, hear is a kiss for him, Lora sez be a good boy, i say the same. Lora is tired spelling so much, sew i will have to stop, Wen I get the gun, i won't shoot birds. Marshall don't like too shoot birds. Lora sez this letter was more than she bargained for, that u best enjoy it, for she had a hard time, then she laffed, Lora is an angle. i kant think of eny more to say and Lora says she is tired spealing. i am going to be a show-man wen i get big, Lora sed hadn't i best go out and see if the cook hasn't a piece of cake for me? but i like to wite , will tell u the rest whean i am not so busy at the bank, an if i am spaired mi helth as pa sez,

“Good by Ned—

“From youre brother Thad Alexander.”

Lora folded up the small boy's letter as he bounded out of the room. “I just believe Thad is going to be our pride and joy yet, mother.”

Mrs. Alexander smiled indulgently, as she looked up for a moment from her novel. “Do you think so? He is *so* different from Neddie, I fear he will never make half the man.”

Lora's eyes flashed, but she was too respectful to say anything.

After a time, Lora wearied of the fancy work she was making. “Mamma, I wish I could do some real work in the world. I get tired of pretty nothings.”



Mrs. Alexander laid down the book and looked in blank astonishment at her daughter.



LORA

“Lora, you are the strangest girl I ever saw! What do you want to do real work for? The idea is perfectly absurd, and likewise perfectly characteristic. You are the only girl in our circle, I



venture to say, who has such foolish whims. Work indeed! Be thankful that you were not born upon that low plane of life."

"But, mamma, why do you think work so degrading? I think a useful life would be happiness."

Mrs. Alexander was utterly incapable of comprehending this lofty aspiration.

Lora turned sadly away. She sought comfort in the conservatory, and bending over some rare and tender blossoms, touched them as if they were human. As she leaned over them, into their waxen cups fell a tear, the life dew of her sweet, pure life.

The flowers in their fineness were kindred to her delicately constructed nature, and they seemed to give her courage, for she brushed away the tears as she mastered the feeling that swayed her. "Well, I will do my best for papa and Thad, and perhaps that will be real work. I believe Mrs. Robbins would say so."

With that cheering thought she flew to her beloved piano.

Mr. Alexander had come in unobserved, and if Lora could have seen the way his face brightened at sight of her, she would not have felt her life useless.

"O papa! when *did* you come? I've something to talk to you about. I want to do something in the world."

"Play Lady Bountiful, or become a tract distributor?"

"Well, I want to be of some use in the world somewhere."



"Yes, Lora, I understand. You are not content to play at living."

"You always know, papa. It's just like a voice sometimes, isn't it?"

"Yes, Lora, but I fear I have often quenched it because I am engrossed with business cares."

"It often, very often, speaks to me, papa, and I am ashamed of living so aimlessly."

Mr. Alexander looked glad. "Lora, I believe you will fulfill my unsatisfied desires by being of real value to the world. No, daughter, I anticipate your thought. I see clearly that while I have made a great success in business, as far as the real valuable things of life are concerned I am a failure. I rejoice that you have these deep thoughts. Never quell them, my child, no matter how you are opposed by the people of our circle. Be your true self, Lora. Society is an empty vapor and not worthy of your pure thought."

Lora's eyes shone. It helped her so, thus to be understood.

"Papa, you know Professor Homeworth's daughter, who is engaged to Mr. Richmond?"

"Miss Eldah, certainly."

"I think she is fine. The night mamma gave her last 'at home' she was here. Also her friend, Miss Maddox—"

"O yes! Miss Dorothy Maddox. That is Dick's daughter. Why, her father and I were boys together on the farm, went to the same little school house and were chums. I want to see her. Invite



her here soon. It will be next to seeing Dick to meet his daughter. What did you say she was like?"

"O! she is the brightest girl. Mamma said she was the life of the party."

"Well, well, this is a strange world. How people do run across each other. Nothing could please me more than to have dear old Richard's daughter become my daughter's friend."

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Dorothea was pouring out brilliant thoughts from her fertile brain to astonish the innocent freshmen, when she was interrupted in her meditations by the postman's ring. A dainty missive was handed her, an invitation to dine that evening with Eldah. That was always a pleasure, but she hoped that Mr. Richmond would not be there, for of late she had conceived an almost intolerant feeling for him. Another ring of the bell announced a private messenger. Her surprise and pleasure deepened when she discovered the note was from Lora Alexander.

"I cannot endure her mother!" said the decided young woman, "but Lora is a sweet young girl. I believe she has real depth and strength of character, and my father and Mr. Alexander were boyhood friends. How strangely the pages of our lives get turned! And we meet in life just as they do in story books. Well, farewell, my silent public. I will afflict you no longer, but will seek a respite from my literary cares, not in the foaming bowl, but in social functions."

Dorothea closed her desk and donned her street garments.



"I will have a regular tramp for a few miles and get a glimpse of my hills. They are calling me. I feel the response in my soul, or somewhere in this mysterious being. Nature never misunderstands my silence. There's a oneness about us that seems a real communion of spirit. I love to put my hand on the sturdy oaks. They seem so human and say to me, 'Be strong! I have overcome and so can you.' I wish people, that is, some people who are worth while, could understand me as nature does, but because I am so endowed as to make people merry, they think that it is all there is to me, and little dream that I am capable of deep thoughts or that I care for anything besides mere surface living. I almost feel as if Eldah understands me at times, or did until she turned surface herself. It isn't Eldah, though!"

Our heroine suddenly paused in her walk and stood looking at her loved hilltops in utter silence, drinking in, as it were, their messages.

What they said to her, she locked within her heart.

She reached Eldah's in blithe spirits, and carried, as usual, a warmth and light to the circle in which she was always a welcome guest.

Dorothea noticed that Eldah looked pale. Besides, she would lapse into silence and seem oblivious of all else, but as Mr. Richmond was not one of the party, her wandering thoughts might be traceable to the natural state of separated lovers.

"Stay all night with me, Dorothy," Eldah said, as the party were separating.

"Do you think I can spare the 'weesma' hours'



from my editorial desk, mine friend? Think what possibilities you are blighting. All my buds of literary fame may hap!"

"Never mind! The roots are alive, and I'll warrant there will be plenty of new shoots. Come on into my den."

Dorothy needed little coaxing and the two were soon enjoying a real girls' chat.. Nonsense and sense so intermingled, that it would be like turning a kaleidoscope to follow them.

"Eldah, what about the Settlement work and our charge?"

Eldah blushed. "I haven't been there much lately."

"You don't mean to say you have given up your work there?"

"Why, no; not exactly; but you see I haven't much time for it."

Dorothea could not keep the sneer from curling her lip, but she said nothing.

"Why don't *you* go down there and teach, Dorothy? You would captivate the whole settlement."

"Me! figuring in slum work! No, thank you. That is not my calling; but," she added, with more gentleness, "I would like to help Marion out of that kind of a life. You surely are not going to give her up."

"Certainly not, but—" Eldah found it impossible to go on.

Dorothea divined the cause, but would not change the subject. She wanted to talk of Mr. Kingsley, and she would, for she felt Eldah deserved rebuke.



"I met Mr. Kingsley to-day and I hardly knew him until he spoke to me."

"Why, has he been ill?" Eldah asked, with forced indifference.

"He looked it. All the spring had gone out of his step and he looked years older. He walked with me several blocks and was his kind self. I think he is the finest man I ever knew except my father."

Eldah's face kindled responsively, but in her eyes was a look of pain.

Dorothea, with the firm hand of a surgeon, proceeded with the painful task.

"He is sacrificing himself upon the altar of humanity, and one of these days there will be a blank in the ranks and then that source of help will be closed."

Eldah kept silent, but the merciless girl before her went on, telling of the patient man who was going onward with his burdens because he felt it duty.

The more Dorothy talked, the more indignant she grew, for Eldah had locked her lips and ceased to utter a single response.

In the meantime the girls had retired, but Dorothy continued the painful subject. At length, unable to restrain her wrath longer, she gave vent to her sentiments in her own emphatic manner. "I must say, Eldah, once for all, that I think that you are the direct cause of Mr. Kingsley's failing health, and if anything happens him it will be your fault."

It was a cruel thrust, but Dorothy meant it in



kindness. She felt she *must* arouse Eldah some way.

The fire flashed in the darkness from two pair of blue eyes. Eldah had been stung to the quick of her soul all through the conversation, but the last was unbearable.

"I meant it, Eldah, and I will not retract a word," Dorothy said, as she turned over to go to sleep.

She disliked to quarrel with Eldah, but she rested unshaken in her conviction that she had spoken the truth.

Eldah lay with wide open eyes staring into the night. It was cruel to have to face again the old questioning, cruel to arouse the restlessness when she hoped it was stilled forever; but after a time her real self gained the victory. She crept up to frigid Miss Dorothy and put her arm around her.

Dorothy let it lie there passively, with no response.

Eldah sought her hand and gave it a warm squeeze. "Don't be so impatient with me, Dorothy. You wouldn't be if you knew the awful struggles I've had lately."

Dorothy thawed internally, but outwardly it was not perceptible. Still, she condescended to say: "Perhaps I was harsh, Eldah, but the truth often hurts."

Eldah shivered as with a nervous chill.

"O Dorothy!" she exclaimed, with the weight of unshed tears in her voice. "I wish *you* would



understand. I cannot say it, and do not feel that I have any right to, if I could."

The appeal went with arrow-like swiftness to the heart of the girl beside her. Dorothy turned over and laid her hand upon Eldah's a moment. "Eldah, I cannot endure it to see you make a mistake, and I feel you are doing it." Then, without manifesting a particle of the real deep affection she felt in her heart, she turned away and was asleep in five minutes, leaving Eldah alone to struggle with her heart.



## CHAPTER XXX.

"Say, Bert!"

"Bert," promptly retorted a tall, well kept University man, as he looked up from the perusal of his Greek lesson.

"That girl we met the night of the frat reception is something out of the ordinary."

"How shall I know to whom you refer when we met scores of the fair?" asked his friend, with provoking coolness.

"There seemed to be but one you had eyes for, anyway."

"I am into Greek lore and haven't time for such nonsense," his friend replied.

"But she isn't nonsense."

"How am I to fathom who the divine one is, if you do not enlighten me? Don't turn Dante, for pity's sake, if I have to hear of a Beatrice." Bertram bent his dark eyes upon his book.

"Pshaw, now! Listen just a minute to a fellow, and then dig in the graves of the ancients to your heart's content. You know perfectly well that I refer to the spicy editor of the Delta paper. You had Jessie and all the rest of them green-eyed with your attentions to the new girl. I warn you there is trouble ahead."



"The more the merrier of that kind," was the indifferent reply.

"But Bert, I wish you would tell a fellow about her. I only had five fortunate minutes with her."

"Why did you not pursue your opportunities better?" Bertram asked, apparently unconcerned.

"I would like to know how one could, when *you* monopolized every vacant moment. Say! You made a fine looking couple as you led her out to supper. Everybody was talking of it. The boys all looked enviously at you, while the girls were so occupied shooting arrows of revenge, we could not interest any of them. It must be fine to have all the girls anxious to go with a fellow."

"It grows monotonous. One becomes fearfully bored with the whole of womankind. It is refreshing to meet with a change."

"The only comment I have been able to elicit from you, even if you did go off with the belle of the ball."

Bertram shaded his too expressive face with his hand, and appeared lost in Greek investigations, but fortunately Lee did not discover that his book was upside down. Evidently his thoughts were engrossed by a more pleasing object than his Greek lexicon.

"Well, good-by, old fellow, since I cannot get you to be communicative about your fair partner of last night. I might as well hie away to lecture halls and forget the charms of Venus in classic lore."

Lee left his friend smiling, but non-committal.



The last mentioned individual was a sophomore, who looked up with cordial esteem to his roommate, who had arrived at the dignity of seniority, and was a welcome guest at all the social functions of the University.

Last night the frat boys had entertained the Delta's, and among them was a guest from a neighboring college.

"Miss Dorothea Maddox," Bertram found himself scribbling on his Greek paper, after his friend's departure.

"He wasn't far off the track, but I wouldn't let him know it. Superb is the word for her! Such a form and complexion! But the fun and wit that flashed out now and then, meteor like, mark her as unusual. Then beyond all of that, there's an under current of common sense, a depth that is rare among the girls of our set. She is as unaffected and natural as a rose just opened."

The man whom the girls looked after admiringly, closed his book with a bang. "Hang it all, any way! Who could study Greek with visions of such a glorious type of womanhood floating before them? I'll walk off my foolishness."

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Dorothea was working intently over her thesis. Her brow was knit and she was completely absorbed by her task, when she suddenly dropped her pen and smiled.

"How strange that is! I was deep into my theme, when suddenly—I found myself walking out to the banquet hall with Mr.—what was his name?"



She plunged again into her work, and while she is thus employed, a glance about her room will give an index to the girl herself, for our surroundings proclaim us, whether we will or no.

Not a careless girl. Neatness and refinement were in evidence from the moment you entered. School banners were conspicuous decorations. A shelf full of books told of her friendship with the best authors. An oft read and favorite book was a story of wild animal life, which fascinated this truly western girl, who had been raised upon the broad prairies and known the free life of the great out of doors, until it had expanded her soul. She chafed like a prisoner at times under the restraints of city life, for she felt 'the call of the wild' and longed to escape the limitations of town, breathe again her native air, and gain a wider outlook.

Within this Prairie Rose are great possibilities. Will she develop them, or just rest content to laugh her way through the world?

No one could escape the contagion of her ringing laughter. It was indicative of the girl, and bubbled over like a merry brook dancing its way over pebbles. Will she laugh her way over the rocks in her life path? It is certain she will meet them with a brave front, however deeply they may wound.

It was a great comfort to her to watch the river, of which she caught a fine view from her window. She often stood gazing at it, as she repeated: "I stood on the bridge at midnight," with such true expression, that brought out all the beauty and power of the piece.



These are sidelights upon the character of one who was the leader in all the mad frolics; for it would be impossible for such a strong type of womanhood to escape leadership. The lesser lights in school life admired and stood in awe, for in the midst of some escapade, she would quell the wildest with a gesture, or even a look, which proved her general like qualities.

But her quiet is invaded by a crowd of girls.

"O Dorothy! We came to consider ways and means about our ward."

"We are just aching to fix her up."

"Since Eldah's engagement we cannot get any satisfaction out of her."

"You've seen her. Do tell us all about her."

"The last shall be first," said Dorothea. "I will answer your question, Geraldine, out of the shower that suddenly descends upon my defenseless pate. I have seen Marion. She is pretty. There is something to the child worth working with. I would adopt her myself if I could."

"O Dorothy! You are the funniest girl! *You* adopt a child!"

"I don't see anything so terribly funny about that," exclaimed stately Miss Dorothy, with a toss of her head. "I would adopt a whole half dozen if I could. Marion is all right, and I'll see her through myself, since Eldah is otherwise interested."

"Well, *do* let us begin her outfit pretty soon."

"All right. We will go shopping Saturday and begin next week. I will make a trip to Mr. Kingsley's and get her dimensions, and won't we have



fun transforming her into a self-respecting little woman! I am going to be chief guardian, for what is the use of expecting anything from Eldah when she is caught in a sentimental tangle."

"Matrimonial, you mean, for I suppose they'll be married before a great while."

"I mean just what I said. It's a sentimental tangle!"

Dorothy's face darkened.

"O well, it means the same," said a conciliatory maiden.

"Do you really suppose a wedding will take place?" asked Dorothy, her face still shadowed by a frown.

"To be sure. Why on earth shouldn't it?"

"Why should it, indeed?" retorted Dorothea, the indignant blood mounting to her forehead.

"Now, Dorothy Dix, don't get tragic. I believe you're jealous because Mr. Richmond didn't take you.

The blue eyes grew black as night under this thrust and the young woman drew herself up with the dignity of an injured queen.

"Take me! I would like to see any man 'take me' unless I *chose* to be taken. Allow me to inform you, Miss Lucy, that I wouldn't tolerate that individual for five minutes! I have never seen a man yet whom I adore enough to marry, and I can just tell you that no weakling is going to conquer me."

She looked triumphantly about as if ready to defy the whole realm of mankind, and it is well that her



listeners were only a group of girls, for had the sterner sex been present, it is feared they would have laid siege to this indomitable castle, for never had she looked more interesting than at this moment of resentment, her eyes flashed and her color deepened.

"Dolly is on her mettle and is very becoming," piped one of the younger girls.

"I don't care. I mean it and a whole lot more! Half of you girls don't know the first thing about love."

"Ah, Dixy, what makes you so learned, and how can you measure us so wisely?"

"Well, there's precious little of the genuine article and the imitation bores me dreadfully."

"After which highly instructive lecture upon a bewitching subject, we will adjourn to meet when we feel the need of another," laughed Geraldine.

The group departed as gaily as they came.

"Mr. Richmond, indeed!" the irate young lady exclaimed. "A man of his stamp cannot compare with Mr. Kingsley. *He* is a kingly man. I could shake Eldah, I get so indignant at her. I never thought she, of all persons, would prefer wealth to character. I vow I will never have anything to do with sentimentality. Friendship with a good man is the better thing. I will stick religiously to that."

So with determination enough to bid defiance to the whole race of mankind, Miss Dorothy turned to her studies.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

"Never mind, Dimple, I'se a big man and I'll get you something to eat pretty soon. There! don't cry. I'll take care of you; but you must stay here like a good girl till I come back."



JACK

"Me goin' too, Jacky; me goin' with 'ou," baby responded, her little face lighting up.

"No, you can't. Mens don't take their children when they go to work, and I'm a big man and I'll have to leave you here till I get back. Here, take kitty and go to sleep. I'll come home soon as I can."

Jack succeeded in depositing the three-year-old girlie on the bed and plumped a half starved kitten into her arms by way of consolation during his enforced absence.

Then out into the street he sped, and was quite lost to view among the moving throngs. Seeing a newsboy, the sturdy little man accosted him, asking for a job.

Tom was a professional in his line and regarded the new aspirant with interest. However, it was against his principles to display his real feelings, so he looked the intruder over in a disdainful man-



ner and chillingly asked: "What do youse want, youse little scamp? Git along with you. I can't be bothered by the likes of youse."

The bright face before him clouded, the lips all but quivered, but the manly little chap drew himself up and explained his errand in such a way as to penetrate the ragged jacket and go straight to the heart of his listener.

"Well! Well! Well! If youse ain't a good'en, then I never seed one. See here; youse aint big as half a dollar youseself. Youse will get lost sure as a shootin' match, and youse can't even count, kin youse?"

Tom secretly admired the youthful business man, and resolved to give him a lift, after he had tormented him, boy fashion, a little longer.

"Where youse live, any way?"

Jack replied, and added: "Please hurry, 'cause my baby will wake up and cry. Her's hungry now; so am I," admitted the small boy, eyeing the other wistfully.

This appeal was irresistible. Tom stuck five papers in the boy's hand and yelled: "Come on Bill, or whatever your handle is. I'll pilot you through this gang and we'll get the baby some supper."

Jack followed close at his heels for several blocks, then waited further orders.

"Now, Sammy, Tim, or Johnny Jump Up, you stand here and yell, 'papers, mister,' and I'll bet your life, you'll sell 'em every one."

Tom disappeared and the little fellow felt truly



forsaken as he stood alone in the throng. His little voice was lost in the crowd, people nearly knocked him off his feet as they hurried by. Many, many people, and no one heeded the brave little lad who was trying to earn his baby's supper.

It was almost dusk and Jack was divided in mind as to his duty. Dimple would be awake and crying for him. The people pushed him so, and he felt great lumps coming up in his throat, but he wouldn't cry; not he; he was a man. "Mens don't cry," he asserted, "only just babies."

The small hero clutched his papers and ran after a man who had given him a half kindly glance.

"*Please* do buy one," begged Jack.

The man handed him a penny and hope revived, but it was quite dark now and he was becoming more anxious about his charge. Besides, his little arms ached with pushing through the heedless crowd.

Just then a cheery voice sang out: "Well, Johnny Jump Up, how's youse luck?" and Jack looked up into the rough but kindly face of his protector, and grabbing him by both hands, the long suppressed tears burst forth.

"There! there! little feller; don't youse cry. I'll see to youse. Here, mister. See this little chap. He's man of the house; buy a paper of him, sir."

In a few minutes Jack's papers were all sold and five pennies laid in his eager little hand.

"I'm awful hungry, and Dimple will cry and cry. I must get her something to eat and go home quick."

"I'll see to that. Come along with me," and the



young philanthropist escorted the child to a neighboring bakery. "Youse see, youse can have five buns with sugar on 'em. Ain't that a good supper for a king? Two and a half apiece, if you divvy up fair. Looky here, mister, toss in stick of candy for the kid and I'll foot the bill."

Jack beamed upon his benefactor. "You are an awful kind boy if you don't talk nice."

"Youse a daisy of a kid; I'll see youse home, for I'll bet a penny youse can't tell where youse lives."

Jack admitted his ignorance of location. "But it's down that way and I know it when I see the the place."

This was correct and they were soon climbing the stairs of a rickety old building.

Dimple was in the rocking chair with kitty held tightly to her heart, crying and talking to herself.

"O Jacky! Jacky!" the tot cried, as she ran toward him, "I'se so hungry, 'ou didn't tum at all."

"Never mind, babe. Here's the nicest supper and a boy come to see us. 'Sides, here's a whole stick of candy; only you'll let me suck it, too, won't you, babe?" looking at the prize longingly, as it seemed in imminent danger of disappearing down the baby's throat. She gave a gleeful gurgle of pure delight, and seated upon the floor was the picture of infantile bliss, as she held the tempting sweet in her chubby hands.

"Won't you save a little bit for me, babe?" queried Jack, anxiously. "Ese!" said the small lady,



generously removing it from her mouth and poking it half way down his throat.

"Here's your supper." Jack plumped the two and a half buns into her lap, while he made the most of the opportune moment to get his share of the candy.

Never did a benefactor look on with more genuine pleasure than the ragged urchin, as he watched this touching scene.

"Well, kids, I'll look in on youse to-morrow. Youse a precious pair."

Left alone, Jack finished his share of the feast, and with the air of a perfect martyr, handed Dimple the last suck of the precious candy. He could hardly keep awake after his first day's labor and nearly fell asleep in spite of baby's poking her little fingers into his falling eyelids.

"Me wants my sleepy down on, Jacky."

Jack aroused himself to his domestic duties and trudged manfully off in search of the reposing robe. Then, although nearly falling asleep in the act, he worked until he got the wiggling baby girl into her "sleepy down" and helped her up on the high bed, not waiting even to relieve his tired feet of his shoes, he tumbled in after her, and the two were soon fast asleep, attended only by the guardian angels that are said to surround early childhood.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

"Well, Johnny Jump Up, How's the world been using youse this morning?" asked a cheery voice, as the man of the house tumbled out of bed and rubbed his sleepy eyes.

"Here's some breakfast for youse, and time you gulp that down, I'll be back and talk business. Here, kid, hurry that down, and if 'taint 'nough there'll be more to foller—I aint the man to see two kids starve to death."

With which the man of business shot out of the door and was half way down the street before the astonished children had realized his presence was not a part of their dreams.

"Dive me some, buzzer," lisped the now wide-awake Dimple.

Jack promptly filled both hands while the child cooed and gurgled with perfect satisfaction.

"God tooked care of us good, didn't He, baby?"

"Dod a nice Dod and me love Him this high!" Dimple threw her little hands above her head and laughed gleefully.

"Papa said the last night he was home that God would help us. I 'spect papa will come back to-day.

"He said it's awful hard to find work and you have to walk a long ways. But I 'spect he'll come to-day."



"My papa tum to-day!" the ever hopeful baby echoed.



DIMPLE

"Papa told me to take care of you and be a man. I did, didn't I, baby?"

The young gentleman of six years drew himself up proudly, coveting, man fashion, the admiration of the fairer sex.

"Ese, me love 'ou, buzzer," and two plump little arms almost dislocated his medulla oblongata in an ardent embrace.

"O stop! you hurt! I don't like to be hugged so hard."

"Me tiss 'ou, then," and the dear little prattler, with her breakfast still cleaving to her rosy mouth, scattered several kisses promiscuously on his nose and chin.

"O you're dirty! I don't like to kiss dirty girls."

"Me aint a dirty girl," babe asserted, as became her injured dignity.

Jack rubbed the surface of his physiognomy and bethought to scrub his charge.

"I'll clean you all up, babe, and then you may kiss me," the young gent said, with true masculine condescension.

"Me don't want 'ou to," baby objected.

And well she might, for Jack was masterful, and bent upon doing his work thoroughly. All her sweet baby pleading were unavailing. He rubbed and polished her with soap until she would have



done credit to an advertising firm for Scourine. Meanwhile she wiggled and tugged to escape her persecutor, and having resigned all hope of using her female arts to beguile, was uttering the most piercing shrieks, when the door opened and their business friend rushed in.

"What's doin' here, I'd like to know? Say! are you killing that kid? I'll lay youse out if youse hurt her." Grabbing the baby from her brother and depositing her on a chair some distance off.

Dimple stopped screaming to see what was happening.

"I was just cleaning her up," apologized the small boy.

"Well, I'd be accommodating enough to leave the young un her hide, if I was in youse place. I don't wonder she objects to soap suds. Never had any too much love for 'em myself," rubbing a grimy hand over his face.

Jack, the immaculate, looked up disgustedly.

"I wouldn't be such a dirty boy as you for anything!"

"Now, little shaver, don't you go tossing any slurs this here way. Thomas O'Ryan won't stand none of your sass."

Tom picked up the baby and set her on his knee. "Say! but youse is a sweet un. Aint you got no maw?"

Dimple shook her head uncomprehendingly.

"What's that?" asked Jack.

"Why, a woman that borned youse."

"I never heard of that," said Jack.



"Well, youse is a sharp un. Some folks call 'em 'mothers,' some 'maws' and I heered onct that rich folks sez 'mamma.'"

"Mamma!" repeated Jack, as two big tears filled the blue eyes. "Yes, we had a mamma, but papa said that God loved her so much he comed right down in the middle of the night and tooked her up in the sky."

"Did youse see Him doin' it?" Tom asked, interestedly.

"No, papa said so. Dimple and me was asleep when God came. I s'pose He drove up to the door real still so's not to wake us up, for he knew we'd feel awful; and so He just tooked her away still, and when we waked up mamma was gone and papa cried awful. Lots and lots of peoples come, then papa took us away on the train. We rode and rode and then papa brought us here, and then went to find work, and he hasn't come back yet; but he'll come to-day, sure."

"My papa tum to-day!" squealed Dimple, with sparkling eyes, and running to the window she looked down the street expectantly.

Tom has listened intently. "Well, old fellow, youse is a brick."

Jack wondered how a boy could be likened to a brick that he saw lying in the street below, but he discreetly refrained from displaying his ignorance.

"What's youse goin' to do if your dad don't show up to-night?" he questioned.

Jack looked perplexed, never having heard his



father called by this appellation, and wondering what show Tom meant. Was it Punch and Judy that he had watched on the billboards?

Tom, seeing his confusion, endeavored to enlighten his listener. "It's plain as peanuts on a rooster's tail that you do not know much about the world."

Jack felt humiliated, but only half understood.

"Well, Pete, 'twon't do fur me to hang around here any more just at present; but you bet youse life I'll be 'round 'fore the day's over and see if youse pop's come. If he don't, I 'spose I'm in for it—got to shell out 'nother dime and git youse some grub to-night," complained Tom, while the fact of the matter was, that his heart was bounding with delight over his philanthropy.

"They're dandies all right!" exclaimed Tom, as he raced down the street to get his papers. "I'll keep track of 'em till their dad shows up; and if he don't, I'll s'port 'em myself. If the blue coats gets wind on it, they'll hustle 'em off to them 'sylums. That would be a shame, nice kids like 'em. They aint no common trash to be knocked around in 'sylums. I'll tend to 'em myself till Jack can earn sumthin'."

Feeling greatly elated over his self-imposed guardianship, he almost knocked over several pedestrians in his efforts to reach the news office. "Give me twice as many this time. Mister, I'm a man of a family now, and two mouths to fill 'sides my own," he added, proudly.

The man smiled faintly. Such tales were of too



frequent occurrence to make much impression on the listener. “

All day the children spent most of the time at the window watching the passersby and hoping each was papa.

“It’s hard to find work,” Jack remarked, with the air of a man who had battled with life.

“I worked hard for you, yesterday, Babe.”

“Me love ’ou, buzzer,” pouncing upon her unwilling victim with great ardency.

“I don’t care if you do, or if you don’t, if you’ll let me alone. There, let me alone, will you?” Jack jerked away from her.

Dimple, who was hungry for mamma’s and papa’s love, turned her bright little face away, while an April shower threatened.

Jack, unwilling to betray any unmanly weakness, but tender and compassionate by nature, was touched.

“O well! Never mind Babe. You are just a little one, and I’ll ’cuse you,” administering a resounding smack as he magnanimously embraced her.

The shower retreated and Babe showed all her dimples. She looked adoringly at her “buzzer,” just as the lords of creation love to be gazed at. Jack was duly flattered and quite ready to be caressed, “Only not too tight, Babe,” as she squeezed him until he was almost black in the face.

“I want my papa!” sighed Dimple, climbing into the broad window seat. “Dod taked my papa, too.”

“God wouldn’t take our papa. He knows we



have to have our papa. It's bad 'nough to do without mamma."

A very sober face had Jack, as he uttered these pathetic words.

"I wants my papa to wock me," murmured Dimple, her little head drooping against the window, and the lashes fast closing over the blue eyes.

"Come on, Dimple, I'll rock you. Here we go!"

He dragged her to the big chair and she fell into it with a thud.

"Now, shut your eyes and hold on tight."

He rocked violently a few minutes, Babe making a comical picture screwing her plump little face up into a knot, trying to keep the eyes closed as commanded.

Jack accompanied the rocking with a song of his own composition, snatches of nursery jingles and hymns his mother had sung to them, blended into the most astonishing combinations. Strange to say, it had a soothing effect upon the little one, whose face relaxed, and the child was so near asleep when Jack dragged her to bed, she only opened her eyes to smile and then landed in dreamland.

He then resumed his outlook at the window, and as the sun sank lower, likewise the little fellow's spirits went down. Besides, he felt an uncomfortable void within, having eaten nothing since his gracious friend provided breakfast.

"Seems like papa's gone to Heaven, too, but 'course God wouldn't take him. I s'pose he had to walk a long, long ways to find work and it takes a good many days."



Jack looked sadly patient, as he leaned his head against the pane.

Just then a cheery, but grimy face glanced up at him and a hoarse voice sang out: "Hello, Johnny Jump Up! Has your pop cumed? I'm in for it, then," he said resignedly. "But I'm your man. Want somethin' ter chew?"

Jack nodded.

"It's yourn 'fore one hundred seconds," and he darted upstairs and into the room before Jack could reach the door.

"That'll keep your jaws busy awhile anyhow," thrusting a chunk of bologna into Jack's open mouth.

"Kid asleep?" Jack nodded. "Well, here's a hunk for her. And wait. Little uns needs somethin' else." Tom proudly drew forth a bottle of milk and placed it upon the table. Then, exhausted by his labors, he threw himself into the rocking chair and felt all the importance of his newly acquired possessions.

"Where's your supper?" asked Jack, stopping in the midst of a bite.

"Mine? Don't want none. Got indigestion, under doctor's care, dasen't eat anythin more than have to, to keep on sellin' papers."

Jack looked very sympathetic. He wondered what that dreadful thing was that interfered with his boyish appetite.

"Can't you eat nothing?"

"Not to-night, mister, thankee. Isn't that roly polly ever going to wake up and git her supper?"



Just then Babe opened her eyes. Tom stole up to the bed and gazed at her in undisguised admiration.

"Landy, but she is a pretty one! Here, little puss, I s'pose youse wouldn't like a drink of milk, would youse?"

"Me do! me do!" She clapped her hands, kicked her little feet in the air, rolled off the bed, and fell in a rosy heap on the floor.

Tom set her right side up and poured out a cup of milk, while his heart beat with true chivalry as he watched her drink it.

"Want some too, bub?" turning to the young gent who stood close at hand awaiting his turn.

Jack disposed of it to the satisfaction of his friend. Tom handed Dimple a huge piece of bologna and seated himself in front of her, where he could admire her to his heart's content.

Tom mentally slapped himself on the back as he exclaimed: "Good boy, Tom! Never anybody down at them missions beat that. You don't mind losin' a supper now and then to make two infants happy. And I say, she's a duck! You're all right, Thomas O'Ryan. Them pious people can't go ahead of that."

As Dimple disposed of the last scrap of the feast, Tom slammed the door on them. "Now git into bed as quick as youse kin, or the black man'll git youse." He left the trembling tots to creep to bed, where they were mercifully tortured with fears but a short time. The stars shone in at the window and saw them asleep, with Dimple's arm around



her brother's neck. Black-hearted evil was all about them, but it did not enter there. Perhaps the guardian spirit was their own dear mother, for they slept as securely and sweetly as in their once happy home.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Morning brought their business friend with breakfast. His rough tenderness was greatly increased by every visit to his charges.

"Now, Peter Piper, if youse pop don't show up, I'm goin' to move in and stay with youse."

"O goody! goody!" shouted Jack, who had struggled manfully to be brave, but was growing more lonely every hour.

"O don't leave us, please!" Jack clung to his ragged protector.

"But youse see, kid, I has to earn our grub; in other words, our livin', or if youse don't know what that means, I has to get somethin' for us to chew on."

"I know!" Jack responded, with all the gravity of a philosopher.

Tom touched Dimple's hair lovingly. "Good-by, little un! Say, Bub!" turning to Jack. "If I clean my face all up good as yourn, will—that is, kin I?" Tom hesitated. Jack looked surprised at his confusion. "What is it you want?"

"Why, kin I—" Tom cleared his throat and felt as abashed at his boldness as if he were about to ask for the hand of a princess. He started out again, and this time made the rapids. "Kin I kiss the little un when I comes home to-night?"



Jack looked into the honest face of his benefactor. "Of course you can!" wondering very much how anyone would care to be slobbered over by a baby. For his part, he wouldn't mind if she never kissed him. But then, he was only her brother.

Tom flew down the street, happy as a king. Anticipation was beating high. What good times he would have raising the kids! He felt already a man of years, and no more generous heart throbbed under finest broadcloth, than the one now bounding with delight over the plans for his proteges. All day he worked cheerily, being a living exponent of the truth, that "the three grand essentials to human happiness, are something to do, something to hope for, and something to love."

Tom had found all three for the first time in his hard life, and his cheery whistle caused many a tired passer-by to go on with increased courage, feeling there was still sunshine in the world, however dark it looked at times.

But to return to the children. The day wore on but slowly to the eager little watchers. At last Jack's restlessness could be no longer curbed. He suggested to Dimple that they go for a walk. May be they would meet papa.

Dimple turned more rosy than ever at the thought, and danced about until Jack had the greatest difficulty getting her into her little jacket. He tied on her hat, and taking her chubby hand in his, led her carefully down the broken stairs.

Once in the street they were wild with happi-



ness after their long imprisonment. Jack was deeply interested in the busy life about him. Dimple's eyes grew larger than ever at each new wonder, while her little tongue chattered incessantly.

"See! see! buzzer. A dolly!" she exclaimed, as she refused to be led past a window displaying many toys.

Jack was willing to be delayed, but his thoughts reverting to papa, he succeeded in coaxing Babe away.

"But we must find our papa, Dimple."

The treasured dolly lost its power to fascinate, as Babe moved away and scanned every manly form.

Jack, in his eagerness, had wandered farther than his intent. He began to feel lost and strange.

"Please, mister, have you seen our papa?" Jack at last appealed to a man who glanced at him wonderingly.

The answer was an indifferent shake of the head, so Jack marched on with the same appeal repeated over and over. Sometimes the words were lost in the noise of the street, sometimes a rough voice replied, "Never knew your dad," or, "Git along there, cubs," or "No place for children of your size."

Sometimes the children forgot their search in the attractiveness of shop windows; but still on they went, growing more tired and hungry with each step.

The lights began to appear in the streets, the baby's steps grew slower and slower, until Jack



could hardly drag her onward. He wondered where they were, and turning off on a side street, sat down on a doorstep to think it over. It seemed so good to rest his tired feet. Dimple cuddled down confidently at his side, tired but contented to be near her buzzer. Such a wee cuddling darling she was, just made to fit into some lonely motherly arms. Her eyelids had a suspicious droop, and Jack soon found a sleepy little head leaning against his manly bosom.

"Wake up, Babe! We've got to find papa, or else go home before you can go to sleep," he said resolutely.

"All wite," chirped the cheerful pet, as he dragged her, not very gently to the pavement.

On they trudged, a truly pathetic sight, such tired little travelers!

At length Dimple was unable to restrain her hunger at the sight of some bakery goods, and began to cry: "Me so hungry, buzzer."

"Stop, Babe! There, don't cry! That's a good girl. Tom is going to bring us some supper," he said with an assumed cheerfulness he was far from feeling, for he wondered very much how they would find Tom.

At last, worn out with their quest, that grew more hopeless every moment, they sought another doorstep. Here the now exhausted child sank into a deep slumber, from which Jack did not try to arouse her, for he was busily engaged in trying to overcome some lumps that seemed to swell each moment until his throat ached.



"I'm a man, so I won't cry, but I want my papa!" The long suppressed emotion burst forth at last in a real wail of distress.

It caught the ear of a gentleman. He stopped, questioned the boy, looked at the sleeping little one, and then went down the street looking for a blue-coated guardian of the helpless.

His search proving unsuccessful, he returned, and lifting the sleeping child in his arms, he gave his hand to the brave little fellow and led them to a plain but brightly lighted building. Depositing the child upon the sofa so tenderly he did not waken her, he turned to the gentleman of the house and told him all that he knew of the children.

"It's all right, Trueman. I'll keep them until I can see what is best to do."

Mr. Trueman handed Jack a dollar. "That will get you a good supper. Are you hungry?" he asked, as he patted the boy's head and thought of his dear ones safely sheltered at home.

"He's a fine looking boy, Kingsley, and as for the baby, she is a sleeping beauty. They are of good parentage, it is evident. I'll look in to-morrow and see what can be done about them. Good-night."

"Do there be any man angels?" asked Jack, solemnly, "and do they wear clothes?"

"Why?" queried Mr. Kingsley, much amused.

"Because he seemed good as a angel and tooked care of us so nice."

"You blessed boy!" Mr. Kingsley hugged him close up to his heart in a way that made Jack almost as happy as if safe in his father's arms.



"We will have some supper and a good sleep. Then to-morrow we will see about finding papa."

Both Jack's arms were around his neck. "I love you and the man angel next to my papa!" So true is the instinct of childhood to respond to those who love them, their fine spirits grasping the true kinship of soul and rarely making a mistake.

Mr. Kingsley carried off his boy, as he already called him, to the kitchen, where he displayed the most astonishing appetite. When it was somewhat appeased, he put him to bed and lingered lovingly over him. Then he turned to the couch and covered the little one as tenderly as fond mother might have done.

He sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands. Some struggle of soul was upon him, for the tense lines were drawn across his forehead, and when he raised his head, his face was white and wan. Once or twice he murmured, "Eldahrema! Eldahrema!" then suddenly checked himself. "It is wrong to sorrow thus. God's will must be best, although we see it not."

Thus with admirable resolution, he forgot his own suffering in service for others. Every ounce of his strength was expended in the effort to lift the unfortunate lives about him to a more wholesome moral atmosphere. He was thoughtful and provident for all save himself.

Presently his quiet was broken in upon by several noisy boys from the street. Rough, hard faces, some really bad, but all of them softened as they neared their friend, who held out a welcoming



hand to each. "How are you, lads?" he said kindly, as they circled about his chair.

A medley of voices began to ascend from the gymnasium. The more quiet children sought the other room, where toys, pictures, and games, abounded. "Brother! brother! May we do this?" Or, "Will you help me, please?" was heard upon all sides.

The unfeigned love that beamed in every eye, was more eloquent than any word portrayal can be. It was wonderful the amount of influence this quiet man possessed over the noisy children. "John, I wouldn't do that," and John, without a question, relinquished his hold upon a smaller boy, looking sheepish indeed."

Many were the side talks and confidences poured into "Brother's" sympathetic ear, and when the time came for them to return to their wretched homes, he quelled the confusion by a chord struck on the piano, and after a good-night song, a simple prayer that was a real talk to a real Friend, more than a hundred children passed into the street, having spent the evening in innocent, healthful, and instructive ways, and but for this open door, many of them would have lingered in saloons or listening to the coarse jests of hardened men and women.

For five years this oasis in the wilderness of sin had opened its doors invitingly and kept many a boy and girl from sinking to the level of their home life.

Marion was the last to go to-night. She turned a wistful face to Mr. Kingsley, saying: "O Brother!



Isn't Miss Homesworth *ever* coming here any more!"

Child as she was, she could but see the pain her question caused.

"I don't know, Marion. I—I hope so, but I fear not."

"Then I shall just *die* without her!" she said, not a tear in her eye, but hopeless despair visible in every line of her child's face.

She darted out of the door and sped on into the night. "I cannot live without her! I say *I can't!*" she exclaimed, vehemently, as she sped on in the darkness.

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At that moment Eldah was in a softly lighted parlor, listening to the adoration of as handsome a knight as ever wooed fair lady. But why did the thrilling and never tiresome tale bring no sparkle to her eyes, but only a sadness that made her sweet face positively pensive?

"My love, you are sad to-night. May I share the cause?"

"Am I? O, it's nothing!"

"But I know it *is* something, and soon I shall claim the right to share every thought."

Eldah felt a sudden and positive recoil.

Mr. Richmond caught the shrinking, and hastily added: "Not against your will, but because you will wish to when we are one. Will you not?"

Then the light full and clear broke over Eldah's soul. "Share with *him* her every thought!" She



never, never could! "One with him!" It could never never, never be!

Love is quick to feel the slightest change in its beloved. Mr. Richmond turned pale, as telepathy flashed what was passing within his dear one's mind. He waited in painful suspense.

"I don't think I can talk any more to-night," Eldah said at length, with a great effort.

"You are tired, or ill, is that it?" asked Mr. Richmond, a gleam of hope lighting his face for a moment.

"I don't think so. Do not come until I send you a note.

He put his arm about her. "You will not keep me waiting very long with your commands, will you, my Queen?"

Eldah lifted a sad, sad face to his. She felt so very sorry for him.

"No, I will be brave and have it out now," she thought, as she spoke with sudden and almost desperate calmness. "Sit down a moment," drawing away from his detaining arms.

"I have slowly but surely been awakening to the truth that I have wronged you deeply. Please do not stop me. I must say it! To-night a full revelation is upon me, and in the light of it, I dare not allow you to claim a lover's rights, much less look forward to a closer relationship. Listen!" she commanded, as she saw he was about to plead. "Listen! I blush that I have been so weak as to yield thus far, for I hold an engagement almost as sacred as the marriage vow; but because I have sinned—"



"Sinned!" interrupted Mr. Richmond. "You sinned! You are not yourself to-night, Eldah. Sleep over this, I beg you, before you say any more words like these, that cut me to the heart."

"Had I not sinned, you would not suffer thus acutely. And I beg of you, in all humility, to pardon, if you ever can, my great wrong in allowing this to develop into an engagement. But better a thousand times an engagement broken than kept, if there is not oneness of soul."

The proud man before her trembled with suppressed feeling.

Eldah never looked nobler than in the utterance of these words. Deep sorrow was in her eyes, but she spoke the convictions of a true soul.

She sadly drew off her beautiful engagement ring, looked at it a moment, and then laid it without a word in Mr. Richmond's hand.

The silence was so profound you could almost detect the beating of these two hearts as they stood at the parting of the ways.

Mr. Richmond sat stunned. He could not believe that all his future happiness was shattered. Words that usually came so fluently, failed him. Eldah went on, as she knew she must, speaking as if she stood in the white light of eternity.

"Mr. Richmond, I confess myself a weak woman. The position you offered dazzled my eyes for a time, but I sincerely thought when I accepted your love, that it would satisfy my heart. 'Mine is the sin and be mine the repentance.' Something deep within my soul tells me I am doing right, and



speaking the truth as God would have me. Forgive me, forgive me, if you can. And believe me, I would never have led you thus far, had I not sincerely thought I could grow to care for you with my whole soul. But alas! I was mistaken, and so we stand to-night for the last time upon Love's holy ground. It would sully my womanhood to continue to take your generous love, and in the full light in which I now stand, walk with you the path whose termination is the sacred altar. No! No! Do not tempt me," as he lifted his eyes to her imploringly.

"I must be true to my convictions. I had rather died than cause any man to suffer thus, but I cannot, cannot be your wife!"

As she said these fatal words she left the room. The silence was broken only by the ticking of the clock. How long the poor man sat there in his misery, he never knew, but at length he staggered to his feet like one having received a mortal wound.

Blinded by grief, hopeless, despairing, he went forth into the night, and midnight, deep midnight was in him.

Only the stars looked down upon the proud man's anguish.

"O stars! sweet stars, so changeless and serene!

What depths of woe your pitying eyes have seen.  
The proud sun sets and leaves us with our sorrow

To grope alone in darkness till the morrow.  
The languid moon, e'en if she deigns to rise,

Soon seeks her couch, grown weary of our sighs.



The patient stars shine on!

Steadfast and faithful from twilight till the dawn,  
Just as they shone upon Gethsemane

And watched the struggles of a Godlike soul.  
Now, from the far off heights they shone on him  
And saw the waves of anguish o'er him roll.

The storm had come upon him unaware;

No thunder fell upon his ear,  
No cloud arose to tell him it was near;

But under skies all sunlit and serene  
He floated with the current of the stream  
And thought life all one golden hallowed dream,  
When lo! a hurricane, with awful force,  
Swept swiftly upon its devastating course,  
Wrecked his frail bark and cast him on the wave  
Where all his hopes had found a watery grave."

Pause long, fair girl, ere you accept the deepest  
tribute of a true man's heart, for while there are  
countless triflers who forget ere the night wanes,  
tread with care, for there are those who give out  
their heart's best affection at one shrine.

Down at the settlement, Mr. Kingsley, too,  
watched the stars, gathering courage to live because  
of his duty to humanity, for "heroes dare to live,  
when all that makes life sweet is snatched away."



## CHAPTER XXIV.

Tom went bounding up the stairs with the center of his countenance so spotlessly clean that the most critically inclined would not have detected a speck of the earth earthy; but as yet the bath was an innovation to poor Tom, and the dusky rim around the immaculate center, served to make the circumference look quite startling.

The look of pleasure that shone in his face was touching to behold, as he bounded into the room with his provisions for the little wanderers.

The empty room! No children anywhere! It was a sad blow to all his rosy hopes and castle building.

"Where kin they be? Has them blue coats got 'em. Or their dad come and took 'em off? And I never got to kiss the little un after all my polishing!" This last thought seemed the most insupportable of all.

Tom sat down disconsolately and felt too badly to eat, hungry though he was.

"Well, I'll just bet *I'll* find them little cubs. I'll hunt till I do!" and pocketing his groceries untasted he darted down the street, experiencing for the first time a keen loss.

"They're the cutest kids I ever see, and I don't want nothin' to happen 'em, 'specially that ere



Dimple Dumpling. Couldn't she smile? Never seed such a one! My face hurts yet where I rubbed it to get it clean fer to kiss her, and I didn't get none, and may be I never will!"

At this doleful thought Tom sat down upon the sidewalk, but after a time the pangs of hunger forced him to console himself with the untasted supper.

"It's mighty hard on a feller to spend so much money as I did on two kids and git nothin' out of it. I ain't sorry as I knows on though; glad I didn't let 'em starve. I'll be blest if that shall happen while I kin work." With which noble resolution he wended his way toward the large box in a back alley where most of his nights were spent.

One of the vast army of the city's homeless. Naturally bright, already educated by the street life about him, will he become one of the criminals that infest the highways, imperil womanhood, and blight whatever he touches? It is quite possible unless some helpful influence reaches him ere it is too late.

He had heard coarse people talk of the city missions sneeringly, so Tom formed his opinions accordingly, and whenever he had been invited to attend some of their entertainments, shocked them by some rough or disdainful reply, so they had given him up as already a hardened wretch. But the touch of baby hands had awakened his nobler qualities and he needed but the right help to lift him to better things.

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Trueman kept his promise and "looked in" next day.

"Any news of your strays?"

"Not a word. I believe something has happened to the father. I think, from Jack's story, that he was a good man, and has been injured or perhaps killed."

Then followed a description of Tom's care of them.

"I wish I could find that boy. He is a diamond in the rough. I would take especial interest in him for his kindness to my babies."

"So you are going to keep them?"

"I shall for awhile. Jack calls you an angel, and says he loves us next to papa. Dimple is the dearest little lover you ever saw. She kisses and pats my face."

"Kingsley, I say it's a shame for you to be without love, when I know of no man more worthy of it."

"Don't!" responded his friend, in a tone of entreaty, as though he could not bear the subject touched upon. "If it had been best, it would not have passed me by."

Trueman, so happy in his home life, felt a keen sympathy for this noble man.

"I cannot be satisfied about Kingsley. It doesn't seem fair. I feel like doing something dark and desperate to that Richmond, exporting him to some remote isle," Mr. Trueman soliloquized as he walked onward.

When in sight of home, he heard a scream of delight. "Papa! papa!" and down the street came



the laughing, dancing trio. Eleanor was carried in triumph, while the girls hung on to his coat and made his heart glad with their welcome. Inside the door, his Katherine waited, with the love light in her eyes.

"Papa, Vera did the wickedest thing (this isn't tattling, Ve, 'cause 'he that covereth his sins shall not prosper,' and I don't want you to cover yours, so I am just taking the lid off for you, see?) explained Gladys, apologetically to her sister, for tattling was strictly forbidden, but this bright child usually thought some way over or around prohibitions that ill suited her fancy.

Papa laughed in spite of his effort to the contrary.

"Papa, listen to my tale of woe ere you banish me from the light of your presence." Vera raised her finger to her cheek and with dancing eyes smiled at papa.



VERA

"Well, well, where did you get that last remark?"

"I heard mamma say something like that," responded Vera.

"What have these youngsters been up to now, Katherine?"

"They shall do their own confessing; I do not believe in tattling," said Mrs. Trueman, in a low, quiet voice, with-

out a glance in the direction of the small daughter, but the rebuke was felt and did its work.



"Come here, Vera, and finish 'taking the lid off your sins.'"

Vera's merry face sobered a little. She had been putting on a more cheerful front than she felt; but always ready to brave the worst, she climbed to her father's knee, as her mother and the children left the room.

"You see, papa," began the mischief, "I might as well make a plunge. I guess I'll land somewhere."

She was certainly an irresistibly winning little sinner. "You see, I wanted to be good and do a kind act, so I thought I would run down to old Mr. Grimes' pasture and drive his cow home. I was on the way home from doing an errand. I never stopped to play a bit on the way, but coming back the flowers out in that pasture where old Brindle is, just called to me, so I forgot all about asking mamma till I was 'most there. Then I thought she would like it so much if I took her some flowers. So I just climbed over the fence and didn't I have the nicest time! I gave a wild Indian whoop of joy and gratitude, for papa, it feeled so good to get out in the almost country, and I played awhile, and then I saw Brindle and thought I would just save Mr. Grimes all that walk. So I turned her out and started her home. I had my arms and apron full of flowers and I thought how just like a story it would be if I could ride home, so I tried to get her to stop and let me get on, but she only run. I caught hold of her tail and tried to climb up, but she kicked me off,



though it didn't hurt me a mite. At last I got her to eating grass and when she was real interested, and standing near the fence, I climbed the fence and gave a spring right onto her back; and do you believe it, that cow didn't like it *a bit!* and just jumped right up! But I took hold of her horns and held on. She shook her head, but I held on tight and talked to her nice until she was kind of still and used to me. Then I rode on until I met a buggy full of ladies, and they laughed and laughed as far as they could see me. But I didn't care much until a horrid boy came out and threw a clod at Brindle and she got scared and run home fast, and shook me awful. And do you believe it, after all those trials, Mr. Grimes never thanked me a bit, but looked real cross when he saw me riding in. And I lost all my flowers, and mamma was frightened looking for me, and said I disobeyed in going without leave. So I had a terrible time!" added the culprit, trying to work upon her father's sympathy.

"Was that all, or only one of the bad things you did this day?" asked her father, who was struggling to conquer his propensity to smile at the recital.

"That was one," answered honest Vera. "Another was, I got terribly thirsty after that long walk, and so—and so, after I picked the flowers, I just milked the cow!"

"How did you drink without a cup?"

"I found a big burdock leaf and made a little cup



and milked into that, and as fast I dranked it up, I milked some more, till I had a plenty."

The invention was certainly unique.

"But, Vera, wasn't that taking something that didn't belong to you?"

"Why, n—o. Was it, really, papa?"

A sober talk followed in which the mischief did some serious reflecting, so that not once during the dinner hour were her bright sallies of wit heard.

That evening a family consultation was held as to the best method of correcting this tomboy, and it was decided that Vera must go alone and apologize to Mr. Grimes for the liberty she had taken. Also that she must confess to him that she milked the cow. Not that the little she had secured would amount to much, but to impress her with the moral side of the question, that she had no right to tamper with other people's property.

"O mamma! Must I tell him about the milk?" entreated Vera, next day, as mamma put her hat on and started her on the odious errand.

"Certainly, Vera. Do you think if we are not honest in little things we can be trusted with greater?"

"N—o," was the doleful response.

Gladys had heard the conversation and was all sympathy with her sister. She put her hat on and slipped out after her. "Never mind, Ve, I'll go with you." She slid her hand in hers comfortingly. "Will you? You are a little—"

"Duck?" suggested Gladys.

"Well, no! You don't waddle, but you're a nice



little bird any way. I don't know the kind, but it's the best of them all."

Gladys gave her hand an affectionate squeeze, for this was a great compliment for Vera to bestow.

Mamma looked out of the window and saw the picture. "Dear little Gladys! She is going to act as prop to her naughty sister, but I fear I must deprive Vera of any one to lean upon. Gladys!" called mamma. "I want you!"



GLADYS

Gladys came back, loyal to her mother's commands, but longing to help her sister.

Vera heaved one sigh, then accepting the inevitable, made up her mind to plunge in and make the best of it.

Mr. Grimes was at work in the yard and did not see her approach until she stood in front of him.

"Well! well! So you are the young lady who used my cow so roughly last night?" he said, looking at her quite sternly.

"No, sir, you are mistaken. She used me roughly."

A very pointed beginning, the humor of which pleased the old gentleman, who, however, betrayed no change of countenance.

"You see, Mr. Grimes, you didn't give me a chance to explain last night. I really intended to



do you a kindness and save you that long walk. I never thought about riding her till I got started. Then something inside of me wanted some fun and I up and did it before I thought. And if you only knew the troubles I've had, you wouldn't be too hard upon my sins, because really your cow didn't treat me real nice. Still, I don't lay it up against her a bit, because I suppose she is ladylike and gentle enough when she isn't so surprised, as I do suppose she was, when I lit on her back so kind of sudden and unexpected like. She kicked me hard when I hung on to her tail, too; but then, I'm not talking against your cow, you know, Mr. Grimes,' she added politely, "but just telling you how it was. Mamma said I must tell you everything, and so here it goes. Maybe you better sit down, Mr. Grimes. It's a pretty long story."

The old gentleman had never met such an original little piece of humanity. He was chuckling inside, but outwardly as grim as his name. He sat down, stealing now and then a sly look of interest at the small lady.

"You see, I'm not a good child. I do naughty things all the time, and my mamma and papa get dreadfully discouraged raising me. But I really don't mean to be bad. But something makes me do it quick, and then, I'm awful sorry for a little while; but the sorry don't stay long enough. It flies away and then I'm bad again. Mr. Grimes, were you ever bad when you were a boy?"



Mr. Grimes, drawn irresistibly to the small sinner, nodded affirmatively.

"O goody! I'm so glad you know how it feels, for you won't mind so much about—about the milk," hesitated Vera, dreading the last revelation.

"About what milk?" queried Mr. Grimes, his eyes smiling now in spite of himself.

"Why, why, you see—that is—when *you* were a little boy, Mr. Grimes, and took long walks, and were very warm, do you remember that you were pretty thirsty sometimes?"

Mr. Grimes nodded.

Vera, beginning to feel a kinship of sympathy, continued: "Didn't it feel good, then, to get a drink?"

Another nod. Vera, encouraged but blushing. "Those were good times when you were young, weren't they, Mr. Grimes?"

Mr. Grimes struggled with an internal laugh.

"I've heard my grandfather say, 'Those were good old days!'" mused Vera, "but I haven't told you the worst yet. It's nothing against my family, sir. They are very honest and never let us play hooky or anything like that," added the culprit, thinking suddenly with consternation of the reflection the milk deal might cast upon the family name.

"It's the first time I ever took anything that didn't belong to me, except when Gladys and I took the fish out of the pantry at Mansie's and took them to the pond and fished with them. Did you ever fish with crooked pins and a stick, Mr. Grimes?"



Vera saw that the inevitable was upon her, so she made her last leap. "You see, I was warm and thirsty, and I never thought it wasn't honest to get a drink from a cow that didn't belong to you; so I just *milked her!*"

Stern old Mr. Grimes broad smile relaxed into a loud laugh, so long and hearty that his wife looked out of the window in surprise.

"Come out here, Jane, and tell me what to do with this little miss."

Vera looked askance at the approaching figure. She felt she had conquered thus far, but she knew not of the evils yet to come.

Mr. Grimes gave an abbreviated history of the cow episode. Mrs. Grimes, less austere than her husband, led the small girl into the roomy kitchen. She disappeared only to reappear with a glass of creamy milk and a plump doughnut.

"Here, sis. A little girl who has experienced such trials as you have, needs something to prop her up."

"But, Mrs. Grimes, you musn't give me the milk, because I've no right to it, since I took it without leave. But I would like to have it *so well!*" Vera was looking longingly at the refreshments. "Do you suppose that if I was walking by here some future day, a long time after, you know, when I've been punished enough, do you think I might have some then?"

Who could have resisted this appeal? Surely not motherly Mrs. Grimes, who hungered for some one to pet and spoil.



"Bless your heart!" laughed Mrs. Grimes. "You shall have all the milk and doughnuts you want every time you will come."

"But my mamma won't let me come, I fear."

"Oh, I guess she will all right," said Mr. Grimes, who had come in just as she refused the milk.

"It's a lucky thing for you that you didn't get the daylight kicked out of you. So I guess we'll call it square this time."

"No, my papa said I must take my money and pay up fair. How much is it, Mr. Grimes?"

"Well, how much do you reckon you got?"

"I think I had the burdock leaf full six times, but it's awful hard to milk, isn't it? It made my hand ache. How much will six burdock leaves full of milk be?"

Mrs. Grimes laughed. "Oh, never mind a few drops like that. We aint so stingy as that comes to."

"But I *have to* do it. So here's my money. I've a whole dime, a nickle, and three pennies. I earned the money for the missionaries over the sea, who have terrible times with those heathen. So I guess you hadn't better take the pennies. And the dime I worked awful hard to get helping Elsie one day when the birds and bees were calling to me. I stayed in the house four hours by standard time, and only did one bad deed in all that while, so I *hate* to part with that dime! Will the nickle be plenty? I had a good many drinks, you know, and papa said I must pay up fair and square."

"Well, may be that's a little too much for six drinks out of a burdock leaf. But then, you see



you got Brindle so excited we didn't get so much milk as usual. I guess that's fair all round. Think so, ma?"

Mrs. Grimes nodded.

"I don't know as I said 'I'm sorry.' I was real sorry awhile when the cow shook me, and I ached so, and when papa said it wasn't right, and mamma looked discouraged. But since I've had such a nice time, I felt the sorry fly away. But I hope you will excuse me for making Brindle excited, and—and if they will let me, I'll walk by here some day and talk to you over the fence, Mr. Grimes."

"Glad to have you any time. We'll be on the lookout for you. Mother here will be tickled to have you come and see her."

"Good-day, Mrs. Grimes. I hope we will always be friends and I will try to come up this way as often as possible," she said, giving a last regretful look at the doughnuts.

Vera sped up the street, having spent the entire forenoon over her confession, with the result given, that instead of impressing her with the need of reformation, she had captivated her audience and gone home with flying colors.

No wonder her mother sighed over the seeming failure of the punishment. Yet it did not wholly fail. Vera was impressed with the fact that she must not meddle with others' property and the lesson lasted throughout life.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

After Dorothea's visit at the Alexander home, she became an ever welcome guest, Mr. Alexander finding much pleasure in entertaining her with stories of her father's boyhood. Lora adored her, and Mrs. Alexander found her an acquisition to her social functions, to which her sparkling wit added fresh zest.

In fact, Mrs. Alexander was so pleased with the bright girl, that she wished to attach her to their party when they went away for the summer; but Dorothy, true to her inner nature, was not sorry to decline their kindness and hie away to the broad prairies of the West, where her father, one of Nature's own nobleman, was waiting at the little country station to welcome her.

As they drove along the country road and she saw the dear old landmarks of her childhood, the old home looming up, and mother in the doorway, her heart bounded.

She returned the same merry girl, outwardly at least. Contact with the world had not taken from her the fresh wholesome nature. She was still the wild rose of the prairie, where her childhood and early girlhood had been spent.

She was now like a bird set free, and certainly



never prisoner in cell had chafed more than she under the restraints of city life.

Now the welcome home to the old free life, the love lit eyes of the home circle, the pride that beamed in every glance at her quick wit, made her appreciate the old home as never before.

"Dolly has come!" screamed her little nieces, as they announced the news to the surrounding neighborhood, who needed not the information, for had they not been counting the weeks until this great event should take place?

The return of the merry girl was a great treat, although her escapades from childhood had caused them to shake their heads. At the same time they felt a fondness for her that nothing could change.

"I du hope Dolly won't get spoiled up there mixin' with them city folks," said a neighbor to her husband.

The good old farmer cast a look of indignation at his spouse, as he ejaculated: "Du you think Dolly is the kind to git stuck up and put on airs? I should say not!" he added warmly. "I haven't seen that child grow up from a toddler and trotted her on my knee, not to know her better'n that. She'll come back the same open-hearted girl, or my name aint Johnson."

"I aint so sure," replied his better half. "Them city folks are mighty stuck up. 'Twouldn't be surprising if she'd catch some of their notions."

"I tell you, Dolly will be just as glad to see plain old John Johnson as she ever was!"

Mother Johnson "hoped so," but in her heart



she was skeptical, and it must be confessed rather in awe of the city damsel.

How delighted Uncle John looked a few minutes later when Miss Dolly rushed in. With what an air of superior wisdom did he look at his faithful partner.

Ma Johnson hadn't time to get a clean apron on.

"I couldn't wait till morning, Ma Johnson, but just run right over to say, 'Howdy!' Well, Uncle John, how are you?" giving the old farmer a cordial handshake. "You're looking real clipper. Where's Tim?"

Now Tim was the only son of his mother, and while not a widow, still fonder maternal love could not have been set upon fair youth, than Mrs. Johnson lavished upon the ungainly freckled face lad who was the butt of the school.

Dorothy had taught the country school before leaving for college, and spent hours helping Tim try to master some of the intricacies of knowledge, and his respect for her was unbounded. He had heard her well remembered voice and slunk up close to the window, too bashful to come nearer. As he heard her mention himself, he blushed to the roots of his hair.

After a brief call, during which Dorothy entertained them with some amusing accounts of city life, of her first ludicrous experience in talking through the mail box instead of the tube, she departed leaving them shaking with laughter, while Mr. Johnson turned to his wife with triumph lighting up every feature, enjoying to the full the



bliss of 'I told you so!' "What did I tell you, Sallie, ain't she the same girl she allus was? I guess I knowed a thing or two. That girl's got the right stuff in her. I seed that when I trotted her around the farm. Can't spile *her*."

Mrs. Johnson agreed with him in her heart, but it would never do to let him have the pleasure of knowing it. So she went out to see about the milk, banging the door. "Men do think that they are so eternal smart! Dolly's all right, though, and I'm right glad on it. Why didn't you come in and see her, Tim? She's the same as ever. Not a mite stuck up. Didn't look a bit too citified for country folks. She asked about you first thing."

Tim turned his back to hide his grin of pleasure.

"If I was in your place I wouldn't go with that feller down there. I don't think she'd like it," Mrs. Johnson added adroitly.

"What do I care what *she* likes?" grunted Tim, as he slid away. But just the same he gave "the feller" the slip that night, and crept up to his attic bedroom unobserved by his anxious mother. He wouldn't have her know for the world that Miss Dorothy had influenced him. Not he!

At the old home, even the inanimate things took on new life with the superabundant spirits of the girl who made everything radiant about her. The house rang with laughter as Dolly related her initiation into the ways of city life.

One day she had stolen away to one of her Nature haunts to commune with solitude. After a time her little niece, Miss Helen, discovered her



and ran to her with a bundle of letters. One was from Eldah announcing the broken engagement. Dorothea was so excited over it she hardly noticed her other letters. After reading and re-reading Eldah's letter, she turned to the rest. Several were from the girls, pleasant newsy ones. Lastly she opened one addressed in a stranger's hand, thinking it some business connected with the college paper. Her surprise was great when she discovered it was from Mr. Bertram Templeton, asking the pleasure of a correspondence with her.

Dorothy was popular with the opposite sex, but so far she had never abused her power. "He is handsome," she mused. "I think he is the most attractive man I have met for some time. Yes, I believe I will enjoy a contest of wit. It sharpens one's intellect. I will try his mental caliber and see if it's worth while."

Therefore Mr. Bertram Templeton was a very happy man a week later, when a most characteristic note was handed him. "She is not like any other girl I know, but is ever showing some new phase of character. I believe she is the embodiment of perversity, but so confoundedly interesting."

Summer sped away, and the dear old home with its appreciative hearts had to be left behind.

Dorothea strolled out by herself the last day, and had a grand time with solitude.

"I will take some of your sturdy strength, old oak, back to the strenuous life of the city. It will steady me when I am wavering, and make me dauntless when needful," she said, as she clasped







her arms about her favorite tree. "And thou, dear brooklet, laughing over your pebbles so merrily, I will remember your cheery song, and may hap under its inspiration, I can sing myself up the hillside of Hope, when despair would otherwise hamper me. And dear little bird, I will emulate your flight into the realm of knowledge." Stooping she picked a tiny flower. "And little flower, I will seek to remain as pure and sweet in all the dust and grime of city life, as you are here in your mossy dell."

Dorothea could not have uttered these thoughts to another soul. Nature she loved, and her real hidden self opened up when alone. She was surprised at these strange soul depths, this girl who was ever at strife with herself and whose heart was a perpetual battle ground. Her higher feelings struggled for expression, but an iron reserve held her silent. Nature quieted this high-spirited girl as nothing else had power to do.

"I am so glad about Eldah and Mr. Kingsley! They belong together, and it is a relief in this day and generation to see the right people mated. I wonder if—" She stopped, and not even mother Nature was entrusted with her secret thought.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

“Come again and greet me as a friend, fellow pilgrims  
upon life’s highway;  
Leave awhile the hot and dusty road to loiter in the green-  
wood of Reflection.  
Come into my cool, dim grotto, that is watered by the  
rivulet of Truth,  
And over whose time stained rocks climb the fairy flowers  
of content.  
Here upon this mossy bank of leisure fling thy load of  
cares;  
Taste my simple store and rest for one soothing hour.”

“I am in this nook because a Higher Will placed me here. I did not know I was being led to this shady dell on the upland slope. Its beauty is a sweet surprise. The way hither was not an easy route. I stumbled oft, became footsore and weary, but still I was urged onward.

The path deviated, winding, apparently ending abruptly, a wall barricading the passage; but always when reached, some aperture was disclosed and a way through discovered. Still the path led onward, now by still waters, though the next turn and I was confronted by a raging sea, the waves dashed in fury against the rocks, no retracing of step possible, yet I dared not place my foot upon that wave; surely ’twould be but madness! I must turn back! “No!” a Voice commands. “*Still must thou on, until I bid thee stop.*”



Terror that amounted almost to frenzy of soul, seized me.

"Pray annul that stern decree," I entreated. "Twere utter folly to venture upon that tempestuous sea."

"*Thou must,*" a firm yet gentle Voice replied. And sweeter than human melody was chanted over me, "*Still, still, I am with thee. My promise shall stand. Through tempest and tossing I'll bring thee to land.*"

Closing my eyes and listening to the heavenly music, I ventured to dip one foot into the water that broke into foam wreaths about me. Strange! I was not sinking. Still fearing to open my eyes, I felt borne onward accompanied by the sensation of safety.

Can it be I am walking the waves as one I read of in the long ago at mother's knee?

Will I, like Peter, soon begin to sink?

Then my eyelids unclosed, and what transformation met my astonished view! Surely I had been dreaming. But no. Consciousness had not failed me, though in place of the stormy water, the waves had receded and revealed a walk by the shore, where the exhilarating breath of the ocean fanned my fevered brow.

A charming path soon came into view, and I followed it up the rugged bluff until I discovered this cool grotto. 'Tis like the aftermath of life, the escape of the soul from its bodily environments into peace and uplift.

Yet every step of the way I contended with the



guiding Hand. Oft rebelling, and yielding only when circumstances forced me into acquiescence.

Is it worth while to resist longer the Higher Will?"

Mr. Alexander stretched himself at full length in his leafy nook, a tiny brooklet murmured musically as it hastened downward to fling its fond heart in the heart of the sea. The squirrels and sly little chipmunks ventured quite near him, while the birds warbled about him.

What is the meaning of it all, the complex riddle called Life?

I, a responsible being, placed here through no will of my own, yet with the power of volition.

Oh, that I had the pure faith of rugged Whittier, when he says:

"I know not what the future hath, of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death His mercy underlies."

Must I to the end be tossed as the seaweed upon the beach? Borne onward by a force that is so tremendous, so awe inspiring, so—magnificent, that my strength is but puny as an infant's, contending against one so mighty, so superior, that it must succumb in the end?

Whittier's thought has been borne in upon me again and again of late, like the endless chant of yonder ocean. It seems to have a message for me as did that one strain of a song. Is it possible in



the deep recesses of my being a desire is silently forming which those lines express? Shall this restless, battling heart here attain serenity and trust?

And is there a happier spot where mortal man may find the bliss for which he sighs?"

A great yearning filled his heart and crept up into the windows of his soul. Every line betrayed the storm tossed nature hemmed in by its environment.

"Will there, oh will there be another chance to reach the noble woman's soul and yield her what all this time I have wrongfully given another?"

There she is upon her mount of vision, white of soul and life, mingling with those beneath her, inspiring, lifting, loving. Yet upon this very night, twenty years ago, I turned aside from the true affinity of my soul, led on by the dazzle and shine of another. Not once have I looked into those eyes, only as I see them in my visions and dreams, but all these years in this little note book, now worn by the flight of time, is this that she gave me at the parting of the ways.

Why, why was I so hopelessly dense as to fail to appreciate her nobility of soul, and see how it infinitely outweighed mere beauty of face and figure? I see her now as she commanded back the feeling that surged within, and said with sublime control: 'Take it, Alex; 'tis my parting gift. I would that I might bequeath you the same faith.' Then she read from the note book:



‘And so beside the Silent Sea I wait the muffled oar,  
No harm from Him can come to me, on ocean or  
on shore.’

Turning from me with the trustful look of a child,  
—yet the courage of a noble woman, who at the  
very moment of relinquishing her dearest hopes,  
and with slowly breaking heart, yet dares to cast  
herself into the arms of a Higher Will—she added  
in a voice of such thrilling sweetness it pulsates  
through my being still down all these years: “I  
know not where His islands lift their fronded palms  
in air. *I only know I cannot drift beyond His love  
and care.*”

And turning her gaze seaward, she seemed to  
bury all her dreams there, and then vanished up  
the path.

And I allowed this rare soul to pass from me!

All these years I have struggled to be true to  
my vows. I believe I have been, even though the  
battle has been fierce at times. But to-night a  
strange quietness ensues. The stress seems for the  
moment lifted. Is it the escape of the soul at last  
into the borderland of rest? Shall I, too, find at  
last the peace and trust that has upheld *her* all  
these years?”

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“O! I’ve found papa! I see his fishing rod and  
hat! Come on!” shouted Thad, as he bounded up  
the steep, followed by Lora and Marshall Allen.  
“Here he is!” bursting into the bower with boyish  
enthusiasm, and giving his father a bear-like em-



brace, for these two had developed a close and dear friendship.

"O papa! If you only could have seen Marshall teach me to swim. I can do it splendidly, and he is going to show me how to row sometime. Papa, *do* please come down on the beach and watch me."

Just then the others reached the Retreat.

"How very beautiful!" exclaimed Lora. "How did you discover it, papa?"

"It was an accident, Lora—or was it," he added under his breath—"a real guidance?"

Marshall and Thad had gone on for a merry scramble still farther up the bluff.

A year had elapsed since Marshall's change of fortune had begun, during which time Mr. Alexander had promoted him twice.

Thad's advancement was a great comfort to Lora and her father.

"Papa, I think there must be a Higher Power to guide, don't you? Because certainly Marshall Allen was sent us to influence Thad just when we felt so discouraged about him. Do you know I would just *love* to know Marshall's mother, and I don't believe I would mind being poor a bit, if I could be such a woman as she is. He was telling me about her just now. I wish the young men out in society were like him," she said, in the most artless, childlike manner, "but there's Mr. Toppleton, who calls so often, I get so tired of his vapid talk; and Mr. Decker is just as insipid, while that so-called irresistible Mr. Noman, is the worst bore of all. I like people to be real and sincere."



Mr. Alexander sat up and looked at his daughter with a new light in his eyes.

Was his idol beginning to think of and compare those of the opposite sex?

He had regarded her as still a child, and there she sat in the early dawn of young womanhood, discerning the difference between true worth and foppery.

"Why do you look at me that way, papa?"

"I was thinking my little girl will soon be a young lady," he said, with a sigh.

"Well, papa, is it so deplorable a thing that you should look so doleful?"

"Yes, and no; but it is a hard thing to be a woman, Lora, and I want to shield you as long as possible."

"I feel it must be hard, for girlhood is not easy."

She, the banker's daughter, could say that, with the shelter of her father's love about her and all that wealth and culture could bestow.

The thought brought her father pain. Why should this cherished child find what should be an easy, happy period in her life, hard?

Ah, because of his mistake in not giving her the inalienable right of every unborn being, the right to a true mother to understand and counsel at every turn of life's pathway. He strove to be all to her, but it was natural that she should miss something.

The equilateral triangle best typifies the real marriage. With either side left open there can but be a void.



"Lora, when men follow the dictates of their hearts and consciences, rather than blind passion for a handsome face and form; when girls choose true nobility regardless of high position or wealth, then there will not be so many mistakes and so much heart hunger in the world. But, my Sweet, we must not spoil this beautiful present with such sad thoughts. You are the very flower of my life. I am happy with you; kiss me and tell me you forgive your father for not making your girlhood easier," he said, with deeper meaning than the girl caught.

"Papa Alexander! As if I ever have anything to forgive in the kindest and best father any girl ever had."

Just then Marshall and Thad reappeared laden with woodland treasures.

"Miss Alexander, I fancied you might like these," he said, with modest deference, placing some wild lilies of the valley and maiden hair ferns in her hands.

"Indeed I do! What rare, dainty things."

"I found them growing profusely and I wish that you and Mr. Alexander would climb to the summit and gain the outlook. I named it 'Inspiration Point,' for it reminded me of something father used to read to us."

"Tell us of it, Marshall," responded Mr. Alexander, much interested.

A mother and her boy visited a friend who lived among wildly picturesque scenery. The boy, disinclined to leave the enchanting out of doors, re-



mained upon the lawn and became quite interested in a pretty pet lamb which was fastened by a cord. Thoughtlessly he loosened the tether, and away the lamb bounded up the mountain steep, the tinkle of his bell and his snowy coat, revealing him springing on from height to height. After him went the boy, enjoying the merry chase. At last the lamb stumbled, and the lad reached the cord and bound him to his wrist, while boy and lamb sank exhausted upon the summit of the mountain. After a few moments rest, the lad arose and gazed amazed, and overcome by the scene before him. It was then that 'he felt the very bud of being in him burst to the full unfolding petals of a man.' Strangely his heart throbbed, with keenest rapture. He had been led up the mountain steep by a guileless lamb and found *himself*! In that moment—so the story goes—he ceased to be a boy, and became in will and purpose a man.

When he returned to the cottage, he told with great enthusiasm of the chase, and with strange power described the scene, with all a poet's glowing tributes. His mother looked at him with surprise and pride, then pushing back with fond hand the damp curls from his brow, said: 'My Paul has climbed today the noblest height in all his little world, and may he always remember that to the grandest spot that ere his youthful feet have trod, he has been guided by a guileless lamb. 'Tis an omen that his mother's heart will treasure with her jewels.'

"It all came back to me as I stood there."



Marshall was usually very reserved about uttering what he felt, but these three seemed to understand him, so it came easily.

Mr. Alexander was the first to break the silence. "My boy," he placed his hand affectionately upon his shoulder, "you found yourself today upon yonder summit, and I have but one regret, which is purely selfish. I trust in the discovery of the deeper powers of your manhood, you will not feel called to other lines of work, and sever our connection."

"Thank you, Mr. Alexander. No, I only awakened to a sudden consciousness that there is a depth within me, and a power of appreciation that I knew not of. Mother used to say of manhood's estate, 'Tis holy ground, tread it sacredly,' and I think the scene today will never be forgotten, for it seemed baptized with beauty and as if I were indeed upon a consecrated spot."

Mr. Alexander gave the boy's hand a warm pressure. "I saw it in your eyes when you returned to us, and I believe you will indeed arrive at the dignity of manhood without the stains that soil so many young men."

Marshall listened modestly. "I did not mean to talk so much of myself. Pardon me. Come on, Thad," and the newly acquired dignity seemed to vanish, as he went whistling down the path hand in hand with the boy.

Lora said never a word, but deep appreciation shone in her eyes.

"Come, 'Heart's Sunshine,' we must return to the hotel in time to dress for dinner, so that we



will not disgrace mamma and her guests with our present appearance."

"O, I hate hotels and society chatter! I just love to wander like a wood nymph in these sylvan spots. Don't you, papa?"

"Indeed I do, my love, but we cannot disgrace our social position; so farewell tranquility and comfort! We must seek the small talk around the fashionable table, and the society of the four hundred, rather than the bliss and beauty of thyself, O mother Nature!"

"And the man of the world had gone back to the world."



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

The sunlight filtered through the shady yard of Eldah's home, making many pleasing effects in light and shade.

Eldah was on the lawn in her white morning dress, engaged in her favorite occupation, the study of plant life.

In the large room under the oaks, she drank in great draughts of inspiration from the blue of heaven and the myriads of leaves above her.

She had lost the weary look of the past months and seemed almost the Eldahrema of other days, although it is not possible to remain the same as we pass through trying ordeals. The experiences of life do not leave us where they find us. Something deeper comes into our character resultant from a decision for the right, so Eldah looked stronger for the contest she had waged, and the very pose of her head showed forth the noble woman, who had braved that dreaded foe, public opinion, and scorned mere social position, that she might be true to her higher self.

She seemed more earnest and purposeful, bent upon giving the world her best and enlarging her own horizon daily.

Her study was brought to an abrupt close by a telephone message.



"You are wanted immediately at the department store of Boyer & Company," said an unknown voice.

Greatly puzzled, but obedient to the demand, she hastily dressed in street costume and was soon on her way.

Upon her arrival at the store she was met by Myrtelius, who looked flurried and anxious.

"What is it? I am being consumed with curiosity. You look positively frightened."

"I am, for it is the most dreadful of all awful things I ever heard of! We are in for it now."

"Come upstairs. I cannot talk here, and I'm stiff with horror. O, Eldah! You cannot think how nearly we lost Marion."

This from Myrtelius, who was least interested of all in their charge.

Eldah followed the excited girl, trying to find out the trouble from her incoherent explanation.

"Let us go to the waiting room, Myrtelius, and you tell me about it."

"No, we must not be seen together, and this is the worst place for such a thing to happen! Dear me, I don't know what we are to do!"

"Myrtelius, if you don't tell me what ails you and Marion, I'll leave you this minute! Tell me quickly what *has* happened. Has the child been run over, and where is she?"

"O it's worse than that! I'm taking you to her."

Myrtelius led the way to a somewhat obscure corner of the store, and from behind a counter piled high with goods, Marion sprang out and threw her-



self into Eldah's arms, sobbing and clinging to her in the most hysterical manner.

"Marion dear, be still, and tell me what is the matter. Myrtelius, you seem as excited as the child herself."

"Marion, I've told you that you must *not* make a scene here in public," said Myrtelius, quite sternly, "or you will get us all into trouble. Eldah, we must hide her at once and I'll tell you afterward. Where shall we take her? Not to your home, for that will be where they will look first."

Through Eldah's mind with intuitive quickness was flashed: "To Mrs. Fletcher's!"

So without waiting a moment she telephoned her friend, who replied to bring her at once. She called a carriage and away went the two girls with the child, Marion clinging to Eldah's hand and shivering from head to foot from intense fright.

"Has anyone hurt you, Marion?" Eldah looked anxiously down into the child's flushed and tear-stained face.

"O Miss Homesworth! He almost got me, and his eyes looked like hot coals. Ma shut me in a room and locked the door. It was down stairs. I jumped out of the window and ran and ran to get away, and to find you, and Miss Myrtelius saw me running and took me into the store. But O, Miss Homesworth, don't ever let them see me or ma'll kill me! And he— I *hate* him! I could kill him, I could!"

Intense loathing filled the child's eyes as she poured forth this cruel tale.



A mother, say, rather, a creature, selling an innocent child for base coin!

When womanhood descends to this level, the outlook is most ominous.

A child sold at noonday! Basely betrayed into the hands of sinners. Aye, at midnight, at cock crowing, and, alas, alas, at every hour of day and night, innocent children, youths and maidens, decoyed, lured, and enticed into the lowest depths of hell! Here in this 'home of the free! Here in our Christian land, here within a stone's throw of the churches, while the sun shines brightly on, and plays over the lawns where your happy little ones flit gaily about, somebody's child is going down, down, down!

Eldah gathered the frightened little girl in her arms and held her tenderly, while her heart beat high with indignation.

"You will never, never let me go again, will you, Miss Homesworth?"

"No, indeed, Marion. I will protect you with my own life, if need be."

Mrs. Fletcher was aghast at the dreadful tale and gladly promised shelter until further arrangements could be made. So the girls felt grateful they could leave her temporarily safe.

"What ever shall we do, Eldah?" Myrtelius asked so earnestly, that Eldah smiled, grave as the situation was, for Myrtelius had opposed their caring for the child, and now she had been party to the kidnapping.

"I don't know yet, but the way will open. I



wish Dorothea could come. She always thinks of a way out of difficulties. Marion's people will miss her, and what shall I do if they come to me?"

"I think I had better telephone Dorothy to stay all night with you, and then if they should go to your house, let her go to the door. We will not tell her where she is, and she has not seen her, she can handle them, if anyone can."

In due time Dorothy arrived, brimming over with indignation.

Hardly had she laid aside her wraps when they were startled by the violent ringing of the bell, and a wild-eyed man, disreputable in the extreme, stood there, looking revengeful enough to cower almost anyone but Miss Dorothy.

"Is that ere gal of mine here? She's run away and we thought 'most likely she lit out fur here, as she was allus talking about her blessed angel. Now, I jes tell you, if that ere gal is here, and you don't give her up to me, I'll have you arrested for kidnapping. I will, pon my honor! Is she here?"

"No, sir, she is not here and has not been!"

"Haint you seen her no place?"

"No, sir, I have not seen your daughter for weeks."

"Well, I'll be blest if I didn't think she'd make tracks right fur here. I do wonder where the little imp has gone, anyway?"

He shuffled down the walk and Dorothy returned triumphantly to the excited family.

"That was a bright idea of Myrtelius to have you come. What ever should I have done? I could



not have stood there and looked innocent. That awful man! Her father shall never get her, if he walks over my dead body!"

"And over mine, too," added Dorothy, sternly.

"If you could have seen her cling to me, Dorothy!"

"I am glad I did not, or I should have shot him on the spot. It was all I could do to keep from throwing him down the stairs."

"But we must be controlled and not arouse their ill will. I hope no one noticed us get into the cab. It was a bold kidnapping at noon in the most fashionable store in the city."

"I don't suppose anyone gave it a thought. Two young ladies and a child get into a carriage hundreds of times."

"Yes, but Marion was rather a striking contrast. She was ragged and dirty. I guess, I hardly know, but tear-stained. Then she clung to me and sobbed in a way that looked strange."

"Well, we will hope for the best, get ready for the worst, and take what comes. Here is the paper boy. We will see if the episode is mentioned. 'Child lost! Marion Knox. Reward for any information regarding her!'"

Brave as Eldah was, a chill ran over her as she thought, what if they should lose her after all?

Late in the night they lay awake, unable to sleep after the exciting events of the day. They evolved what seemed to them a feasible plan.

The following morning, while the family were



at breakfast, a man rang the bell and demanded to see Miss Homesworth.

Dorothy answered the ring.

Another slovenly looking creature stood there.

"Well, what is it you want?"

"I want to know where that gal is what was lost yesterday? If you've got her you better fetch her out afore we make you trouble. What I say I mean! There's trouble a brewin if you don't own up about that gal."

"The child has not been here for weeks, I have not seen her, neither do I know where she is."

Dorothy said this with such a firm ring of truth in her voice, that it carried weight.

The man did not doubt her. Besides, he was slightly afraid of her and cowered, as weakness ever does in the presence of strength.

"Number Two disposed of," she announced. "I think they will give us a rest now."

Dorothea returned to her work and it was decided that Eldah must not be seen at the door, while wisdom cautioned that she should stay rather closely within for a time. Several days passed uneventfully, except that the frat girls gathered at Eldah's home to sew for their charge.

Such grave consultations and perusal of fashion plates as ensued.

The girls all coming from good homes, their ideas for Marion's outfit were hardly in harmony with her position. However, Eldah's mother came to the rescue, and under her judicious management, and with the assistance of the family dressmaker,



they at length prepared pretty and serviceable costumes.

The girls were very enthusiastic, and worked with a will, so at the end of two weeks, Marion was arrayed in pretty and becoming garments.

This had been a time of great suspense and anxiety to the girls. They had felt it advisable to change Marion's hiding place, lest they had been watched.

This was accomplished at night, and the greatest secrecy maintained.

They had secured an excellent home for her in the country, and packed her small trunk. Eldah expected to take her the following night.

As for Marion, she was completely metamorphosed. Frequent baths, the tangled ringlets nicely combed, and her neat dresses, had transformed the child of the slums into a respectable little lady.

The few who were allowed to see her could hardly realize it was the same child, so quickly had she responded to the loving care bestowed upon her.

The neglected child had vanished, and in her place shone out the embryo woman she was meant to be.

Her people had not been idle, but their policy was a secret one. Being thoroughly convinced that Miss Homesworth was in some way connected with the kidnapping, they had kept strict watch upon her every movement.

Eldah had received several warning letters telling her to produce the child or the result would be dis-



astrous to herself. She, however, was unfearful except for Marion, but was most anxious to hasten their departure.

On this memorable day Eldah went to the home of a friend about half a mile distant from Marion's hiding place, intending under the cover of darkness to slip over to see the girl and make some final arrangements for their trip the following day.

She had hardly been seated, before the maid ushered into the parlor a girl with terrible looking dark eyes.

"Ah! I've got you at last, have I?" Hattie exclaimed, in tones fierce enough to chill one's heart blood. "I've tracked you night and day, yet I never could catch you, but now—" She gave a fiendish laugh and began to heap imprecations upon Eldah. "So you are the saint what stole my little sister! You might as well own up. It's out. We know you've hid her, and you will produce her. Tell me where she is, or you will not leave this house alive!"

Eldah's friend was frantic and rushed out of the room to call help, but Eldah's control was admirable, although violently alarmed for fear of Marion's discovery, she had no thought for her own safety.

She arose and faced the agitated girl. "So this is Hattie. Often I have heard Mr. Kingsley speak of you. He is your friend. Would he wish you to do so, Hattie?" Eldah spoke calmly and looked at the girl intently. For a moment Hattie wavered under Eldah's steady gaze, then the evil again rose within her.

"Yes, he's another of your saints! *I tell you*



*I am going to have my little sister!* Tell me where she is! I'll give you just five minutes, and if you don't, I'll call my paw. He's just around the corner, waiting to do his part of the job when I give him the whistle. Are you going to tell me?"

Eldah took hold of the girl's arm gently but firmly: "Hattie, you have gone to ruin. Why do you want to drag your little sister after you? Besides, you begged Mr. Kingsley to save Marion."

Hattie had been drinking heavily. All her better impulses were dulled.

"You needn't preach to me, I tell you. I want my sister! I'll have her, too! And you must abide by the consequences if you do not tell me."

In her eyes burned a light fearful to behold.

"Time's up. Will you tell me?"

"No! I will *never* tell you where Marion is! I will protect her if it takes the last drop of my heart's blood!"

In an instant Hattie shot out of the door and down the street, as she gave a shrill whistle which was answered by her villain of a father.

"Fly! Eldah!" screamed her friend. "They will be back in a minute," rushing to doors and windows to assist the excited maid in making them secure.

"I am not afraid for myself, but I must get Marion out of town to-night."

She darted out the back door and through an alley. She gained time while her pursuers were seeking admission to the house. But suspecting



she had fled, they took separate ways, and just as Eldah reached the house where Marion was hidden, Hattie caught sight of her.

"She has gone to see Marion now, paw," Hattie reported, when she met him a few moments after.

In the meantime Eldah, still breathless from her run, ordered Marion hidden in the attic; and they had called up the chief of police; also the president of the Humane Society.

How Eldah longed for Mr. Kingsley's advice and help, but she was too reserved to seek it.

Shortly after Doctor Percy appeared and promised to do all in his power to assist them. He thought it wise, now that her hiding place had been discovered, to take the child before a Judge and let the matter be decided as to the parents' fitness for guardianship.

"You young ladies have acted nobly, and I want you to know that the whole Humane Society is back of you. I advise you to take the course suggested, as they can cause unpleasant notoriety by arresting you for kidnapping."

Eldah had previously telephoned Dorothea and Myrtelius, and the three girls blushed and smiled over their position, in spite of its gravity.

The chief of police arrived and promised protection for the night. He had encountered the father and others of their kind, and ordered them to leave, telling them they should have full justice done them in court next day.

The case was set for three p. m. An hour earlier



the girls were obliged to relinquish their now beloved care to the chief of police.

Eldah begged that they might accompany her to the court room.

"No, she must go alone and state the case entirely uninfluenced by you," was the inexorable reply.

Marion could hardly be severed from her newly found friends.

"Oh, *don't* send me down there without you, Miss Homesworth. I know they will get me some way, and I'll never, never see you again. Don't, don't send me away from you!"

Dorothea finally separated them.

"Listen, Marion. We want badly enough to go, but Doctor Percy says we cannot; so you must go and stand up like the little woman you are, tell the Judge the story, and that you want to come to us, and he will send you back, I am sure."

Marion started and then ran back and threw her arms around Eldah. "I will go because you say they will send me back." Resolution was stamped upon the bright little face. "I *will* get back to you if I have to fight every step."

"You will return all right, I am sure, Marion dear," said Myrtelius reassuringly, stroking the child's hair. "It's a clear case in your favor, so be our brave girlie now."

After Marion was on the steps, she gave a last appealing look at Eldah.

Eldah's calm was broken down. The intense strain had been too much, and for a few minutes it seemed as if she could never endure it, to wait



hours yet in uncertainty. But the girls were hopeful and cheering, so that by time the hour had passed, she was quite composed and satisfied all would be well.

Another hour of intense watching on the part of all three, an hour that held the tremendous decision of a child's destiny that was hanging in the balance.

At five p. m. Doctor Percy 'phoned that the victory was won, that Marion had acquitted herself most creditably, and brought tears to the eyes of the stern old Judge, who never was known to weep. Her parents and Hattie were present and pled with her to go with them, but the child had caught a glimpse of something higher. "No, I never want to live that life again, Judge," Marion said in a clear, ringing voice that touched all hearts.

"Girls, you have done a noble deed. Allow me to congratulate you upon your protege, and upon your grit. Your courage has been admirable."

"When Marion finished her story, there was not a person present who was not busy using their handkerchief. The Judge said: 'Marion Knox, I set you forever free from those who sully your innocence. Go to your new friends and become a good woman. You have the material all right, although where you got it is a fathomless mystery.'"

"I have to leave you now, but the chief of police will conduct your charge to you in safety."

The girls were elated, but Eldah felt in keen



suspense still. "Some way I cannot rest until I get my hands upon her again," she said.

Marion was so joyful she was treading air. Her father wept crocodile tears. Hattie declared she would destroy herself if Marion deserted her family, but her mother, more wily than the rest, touched upon the one tender link in the girl's life that bound her to the past.

"The babies have cried their poor little eyes 'most out, lookin' and callin' for you, Mame."

Marion's heart gave a bound. She had loved the children and been their sole caretaker.

Her mother, with evil craftiness, saw that she had touched the right chord.

"Won't you come home jest long enough to bid the kids good-by, afore you go off to be such a fine lady?"

Marion turned to the chief of police: "May I go long enough to kiss the tots good-by? Will you go with me and then take me straight to the girls?"

"Certainly," responded the blue-coated individual, and he walked away with the family.

Marion was radiant over the thought of her freedom, but saddened somewhat over the neglected little ones she was leaving behind.

Say not that evil does not walk the earth to slay the unsuspecting.

Marion went into the place and was joyously welcomed by the children.

The police remained outside. Presently that creature of evil, the child's mother, slipped a gold



piece into the hands of the officer, and shortly after he sauntered carelessly off.

Marion, secure in her belief in her freedom, and trusting implicitly in the protection of the above mentioned individual, had not a fear as she romped with the children.

Meanwhile the girls are listening, listening for every step. Hours pass. *No Marion!*

They called up Doctor Percy, who assured them all was well, that the police had her in charge and she was safe.

"Marion! Marion! Marion!" moaned Eldah, "I shall never forget your last look till my dying day."



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Two days after Marion's recapture the story was told in the leading dailies, stating that several society girls were implicated in the kidnapping.

In brief, Eldah and the girls found themselves more notorious than they enjoyed, but they had little time to think of that, so interested were they in devising means to recover the lost girl.

Doctor Percy had called upon the girls as soon as he learned the distressing news, and a plan of rescue was evolved.

The Christian Endeavor and other societies were aroused, and a plan of concerted action was put into immediate execution. The search was most thorough and exhaustive. Still no Marion or any trace of her.

The night of the disappearance, Eldah was awakened by a scream, or some sound startling enough to send her to her feet ere consciousness came. Her thoughts were so full of the lost child that it was no wonder she exclaimed: "Marion! Marion!"

She threw on the robe that lay near, and rushed down stairs to the front door. She flung it open, calling: "Marion! Marion!"

But no one was there. She listened, and far in the distance fancied she heard voices and running.



"O I believe she *did* come!" She peered out into the darkness. A clock struck midnight. "She ran away and they followed and took her again. O if I had not gone to sleep! But I was so worn that tired nature could hold out no longer."

Eldah slept no more that night. She felt helpless, for it was useless to call up the police, who had failed her. She could do nothing but wish the hours away.

Some of her friends, with whom she advised next day, were of the opinion that it was a dream, due to her overwrought nerves, but Eldah felt in her heart that Marion had been near her and cried out for help, and that the child was retaken when at her very door, she doubted not.

"She said she would fight her way back to me, and, poor little girl, she bravely tried."

Eldah could not rest night or day, but pushed the search with an intensity that did not wane.

Many leading people formed into committees and for two months the case was pushed with unabating zeal, but alas! Marion was as completely lost sight of as if the earth had suddenly received her into its bosom.

Eldah's family and friends became alarmed over her physical condition. She could not forget the child even in her sleep. It seemed Marion's hands were reaching out to her, and her eyes pleading for rescue.

It was decided that Eldah must have a complete change, so it was thought best to send her away to a little village nestling on the mountain side,



most picturesque in its delightful scenery, and not far from the seashore.

A few days previous to her departure she was sitting in the carriage awaiting the return of her friend, who had gone into an unpretending cottage across the street to see her laundress. Suddenly Eldah was startled by encountering a pair of fierce black eyes cast upon her in a way that seemed as though they burnt her.

She screamed, "Hattie!" and sprang out of the carriage and rushed after her, but the girl disappeared in the house opposite, and Eldah could not gain an entrance.

She was convinced by Hattie's terrified look that Marion was hidden near by. She drove at once to Doctor Percy and he sent a trusty detective, but alas! the defenceless bird had been removed to another cage.

This was too much for Eldah's strength and she was hurried away, although she consented only upon the promise of the girls that the search should be pushed as vigorously as if she were at its head.

\* \* \* \*

Our story must now turn to a very different quarter of the city, and to no other than Marion herself.

She had rushed into the house and clasped to her motherly heart the babies, who welcomed her so vehemently that an hour sped away ere she thought of leaving them.

Glancing at the lengthening shadows she was surprised to discover that it was six o'clock.



"Now, Bluebird, kiss me good-by; Tiddledewinks, too, for I must go this minute!"

She went to the door. It was locked.

She pounded, and then called to the policeman, whom she doubted not waited outside for her coming.

No answer. She ran to the window. That, too, was fastened. She tried the door leading into the other room, but it was bolted on the other side!

Then the terrible truth flashed upon her. She had been lured home by her mother, and trapped in the basest way!

Marion did not burst into a flood of tears as a weaker nature would have done. Besides, she was too angry to cry. She must think how to escape.

"Ma's a very devil, but I'll outwit her yet."

Marion's brain was keen and she had diplomacy far beyond her years.

"I'll get back to the girls if I die on the way!" she murmured between clenched teeth.

The dogged look of stubbornness that formerly characterized her face returned. "I can be foxy, too."

She resumed her play with the children, and when Hattie appeared a little later, never betrayed that she realized she was a prisoner.

Hattie was in an irresolute state. One moment remorse urged her to rescue Marion, but the next the evil spirit seemed to possess her utterly.

Marion showed no sign of alarm at the deepening shadows, so Hattie's dull brain caught the idea that she was really pleased to get back.



"Aint you awful glad to get home, Mame?"

"Glad to get home?" Marion repeated with scorn, then remembering that her only hope lay in being artful, she began dancing about the room with the children.

In the midst of the hilarity her father came in. "Well, youngsters, it's good to see Mame back, aint it?"

He started to stroke her hair. "My, what a fine looking young lady you've got to be! I hardly knowed you, you be so fixed up."

Marion sprang away from his touch as if it burned her.

She could hardly control her tongue. She wanted to brand him as a scoundrel and traitor.

"Let me alone, pa! You and I don't love each other. Never did, you know."

Marion escaped to the opposite side of the room.

"You allus was a very imp of a young un, jes' like a mule. I'd thought your fine friends would have larned you some manners to your dad."

Marion's eyes gave a warning flash. The danger light was in them. Just then her mother; say, rather, *the creature* devoid of all sense of womanliness, the fiend incarnate, looked in. "Come on, my pretty gal. Come eat some supper with your heart-broken maw. O! it's night after night I've cried my eyes 'most clean out of my head a thinkin' of and longin' for you."

Marion, with her old boldness, could endure it no longer.



"That's enough, ma. I bet you laid awake nights a cryin' for *me!*"

Marion could not help the look of utter contempt and hatred that darkened her face.

Fortunately the mother was too elated over her victim to notice it.

Marion pretended to dine with the rest, but in reality she was observing every window and door critically and meditating flight.

She saw her father drink heavily from the black bottle, followed by Hattie, and *the creature*.

The thought came to her that when they were all under the influence of liquor she might make her escape.

Her father proposed that they drink the health of their charming young damsel, which they proceeded to do with great gusto.

Their number was increased by several coming in. Coarse songs and jests followed, interspersed with the uncorking of bottles.

Every moment increased Marion's disgust and despair, but it stimulated her to escape or perish.

Live in such a place after breathing a pure atmosphere, she never would! She could die first, and she would!

As the evening advanced, her father lay in a drunken stupor, while the creature was no better off. Hattie was half awake, but more stupid than usual.

Some one had left the side door open. All were too intoxicated to think of Marion.

She gradually and with greatest care, slipped



over near the door. Then, when Hattie's face was turned away, out she sped; out into the pure, free air! Out, away, away!

She ran, she knew not where. She cared not. *Anywhere* out in God's world. *He* would shelter her.

Presently she was aware that some one was running after her.

She feared it was the policeman, but pausing to regain her breath, discovered it was Hattie.

The thought came to win Hattie over.

She knew at this stage of the drink she could be coaxed into almost anything.

Marion waited for her to come up.

"What are you clearin' out again for, you little brat?"

"Come on, Hattie, and I'll tell you. See! I have some money. Let's spend it."

"Agreed!" replied the poor, confused girl. "Get me something nice, won't you?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"I don't know. My head feels queer."

She was almost ready to drop asleep standing on her feet.

Marion saw a car going in the direction of Miss Homesworth's. She hailed it, saying: "We'll talk about what you want on the car, Hattie."

Marion's heart throbbed so she thought the conductor and every one must hear it.

Nearer and nearer they came to the object of her desire.

It seemed as if she would die from very ecstasy.



They got off the car and Marion fairly dragged Hattie along till they reached Miss Homesworth's door.

It was then that she threw herself against it in a transport of agonized joy and frenzied pain.

She screamed for Eldah. Her cry seemed to arouse the nearly slumbering girl at her side to the gravity of the situation.

"What you doin', screamin' for Miss Eldah? Where are we, anyway?" Staring up at the stately home blankly.

Then it dawned upon her. "O you minix! If you aint cleared out for your angel's and taken me with you! Well, I'll fix you!"

A night watchman unfortunately came by at that instant. Hattie ran to him. "Here! Get that girl away from that house! She's tryin' to break in."

The man sprang up the steps and clapped a pair of handcuffs on Marion.

She pled, screamed, and raved like a madman.

So near freedom, hope, a pure life, *heaven!* And then thrust back into the teeming whirlpool of evil!

She bit, she acted insane, indeed, so he was glad to lock her up in the nearest station.

"God! God!" she wailed. "So near her, and you didn't save me!"

O strange, strange paradox of human life! So near the haven of safety, then a tragedy. Almost touching the shore, and then carried out to the storm tossed ocean.

The sad conclusion, too sad to record, too sad for the mind to dwell upon; but true, bitterly,



*terribly true.* Marion was conveyed back to her home next morning, and the episode not reported.

Here we lose sight of her for a time, but let us hope that so brave a spirit, will be rescued from the den of thieves, for those who steal the bloom from innocence, and betray the childhood of the land, certainly are the most debased of all knaves.

How many a life goes down when inside the harbor, as this brave child, with but a door between herself and her friend. But it was opened—just a moment too late!



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

Sometime has elapsed since we have heard from the bright young girls who were bravely fighting life's battle.

Nelle, still in her country retreat, was developing a most lovable character, while Elsie, in the wholesome atmosphere of the Trueman family circle, could but imbibe womanliness and culture.

Nelle's friends had found her company so indispensable that a permanent home was offered, and she had already become like a daughter in the household.

Miss Wymen's heart warmed to all the friendless ones in the great city, especially after hearing of Elsie's thrilling experience, and she had interested many in opening their homes to the fresh air work.

She was a woman of strong character and great decision.

Nelle had become so much to her, that she suddenly asked herself: "Am I becoming selfish with that child? I fear so. I wonder if she does not need younger company? I have it! I'll invite Elsie down for two weeks this summer."

Miss Wymen went in quest of Nelle, and as she caught a glimpse of her rosy cheeks and happy expression, she exclaimed: "Thank the Great Master, she is safe, and that I was guided to her."



What a contrast Nelle presented as she was bringing the horses from the pasture.

*This* the pale, sad looking girl, who was all alone in the world?

Bright-eyed now, full of life and vim, she made a pleasing picture.



Miss Wymen told her of the plan. Nelle was delighted, until a thought came that clouded her brow.

"What is it, child?"



"O! she can't come, for she couldn't leave the children."

"Well, if that's all, we will ask her to bring one of them."

Miss Wymen hastened to put her kind thought into action, and next day Mrs. Trueman received the invitation.

"Yes, Elsie must go. It will do her good, and Gladys needs country air. I am sure Noble will think it most desirable."

So she communicated the good news to Elsie, who was so brimful of happiness it seemed as if the house would hardly contain her.

In less than a week the two were on their way.

Gladys, with wide open eyes, drinking in all the summer beauty like the artist soul she was, Elsie in the gayest spirits.

The truly feminine meeting of the chums was interesting to behold.

Nelle had the roomy carriage at the station waiting to store away girls and baggage.

And what an astonishing amount of conversation was crowded into that little half hour's ride!

Gladys enjoyed everything she saw. "It's just like heaven, isn't it, Elsie?"

She was wild to get out and run, so they drove slowly and allowed her to be the first to reach the house.

She paused shyly when she saw a lady waiting on the porch to receive her, but the kind face reassured her.



She forgot her embarrassment next instant, for a squirrel bounded across the lawn and up a tree.

"O didn't he do that quick? God made him on the same plan as the lightning, didn't He?"

The blue eyes were lifted thoughtfully to Miss Wymen's face.

The lady laughed as she greeted the small girl.

"So this is my little guest from the city. I am glad to see you, dear, and I hope you will not feel strange or lonely a moment."

"O, just see those birds feeding their babies! God must know lots and lots to make so many animals and flowers, and lightning. Shouldn't you think He'd run out of ideas?"

Mamma says she does sometimes when she is tired, but then God is smarter than mamma even, though it seems hard to believe."

Miss Wymen realized that she had her hands full, for before she had answered the last question, more were being poured like a torrent upon her.

"When that dear little squirrel ran up the tree, and turned around and looked at me with his bright eyes, I just thought 'bout the lightning. It struck a tree in our backyard the other night. I was standing by the window and saw it do it. It just ran down the tree and tore off a big piece of bark, and went right into the ground. It was bluish red, and then it thundered so it sounded like the rocks were falling right on our house. I jumped and ran to mamma. 'God is speaking loudly to us just now, isn't He, dear?' she said, and I suppose He



just *has to* when we don't listen when He whispers to us, don't you?"

"Mamma says He whispers to us in the flowers, sends us lovely messages in the songs of the birds and that the leaves sing nice things to us; but sometimes we do not pay 'tention, so He speaks louder in the wind and thunder."

Gladys paused for breath.

"Yes, that is right. God does talk to us in all those ways, little girl, and I'm afraid we often need Him to speak quite loudly to us in the storms that touch our lives, because we will not listen to the whispers of "the still small Voice."

Here and there a silvery thread began to show in the brown coil that crowned Miss Wymen's head.

She was just in her prime, but the storms had shaken her life and left their trace.

As she led Gladys into the house a yearning filled her heart.

But for a grave out there in the churchyard, she might now have held a hand like this and called it all her own.

She was a resolute soul, and had nobly risen above her pain by throwing herself into service for humanity.

Ere the girls came bounding in, Gladys and she were quite friends.

It was a new and wonderful world to Gladys. The "little cows," as she called the calves, and other animals interested her greatly, but the flowers, sunset and birds, fascinated her.



"She is the most remarkable child of the most remarkable family that ever lived," enthusiastically exclaimed Elsie one day, as the three sat together while Gladys had gone for a ride with Miss Wymen's nephew, Max.

"I wouldn't have believed that such a family could exist outside a fairy tale. The deep things that child says. Why, I just feel like stupidity in the presence of brilliancy. Those eyes seem to see into the heart of things, and Vera, I wish you could see her! She is the dearest, naughtiest little sinner you can imagine. The things that child does are enough to drive an ordinary mother crazy. But her mother knows just how to manage her. She isn't mean, but just a mischief from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot. And then our baby! Well, people think there never was one so smart—I mean other people—and so polite. She is going to be like Gladys, for she says the deepest things. And her eyes are like large violets with dark, long lashes. She goes to Sunday school and comes home and talks about Daniel and all those people, and she just three!"

It was pleasant indeed to witness Elsie's pride in her charges.

Miss Wymen gave thanks as she thought of this bright girl's escape from a life of shame.

"Only the other day," Elsie continued, "Eleanor was crying. Her mamma said: 'Come here, dear, and let me wipe away your tears.' Eleanor did not move, but looked at her mother thoughtfully a moment. 'Why don't you come to mamma and let



her wipe away the tears, Baby?' 'I can't, mamma.' 'Why not?' her mother inquired. 'Why, you can't wipe away my *thoughts*, can you, mamma?'"\*

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Miss Wymen. "I should think she was too brilliant to stay here."

The two weeks glided by like a bright dream. Pleasant drives, picnics in the woods, and happy talks, filled the time.

It was like some bright spots in our lives to which we look back as to halcyon days—when not a cloud crossed our sky, when there was glory on the leaves and grass, and life seemed a beautiful summer day.

It is well that these green spots come, the memory of which will serve to illumine some cloudy days when the winds are chill, and the flowers have faded.

Hope revives when it gazes upon some of the pictures that memory holds up, and sings anew of the Homeland where the birds and flowers are fadeless.

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\*A true remark of two-year-old Eleanor Sanford.



## CHAPTER XL.

Lora and Mrs. Alexander had remained at their seaside retreat some weeks longer than usual. Mrs. Alexander felt the need of relaxation to become sufficiently strong for the round of festivities of the approaching season.

Lora loved the outdoor freedom, and one day, in her rambles with a party of young people, they stopped at a pretty cottage nestling on the mountain side. The artistic beauty of the place was enhanced by a most beautiful waterfall.\*

Lora was so charmed by the place that she afterwards frequented the spot whenever possible.

She had never been permitted a glimpse of the owner but once. Then a lady came to the door and spoke to the little maid who was weeding the flower beds. Her voice was refined and her manner so superior to the native inhabitants of the place, that Lora felt drawn to her, and through their stay, found her thoughts turning very often to the sweet lady in the cottage.

Her surprise was great one day to see Professor Homesworth's daughter come out of the gate and meet her face to face.

"Why, Miss Homesworth! When did you come?"

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\*See cover.



And are you staying in this delightful place?" exclaimed Lora, pointing to the cottage.

"I came last evening and I am visiting here with a dear friend of my mother's," Eldah replied, drawing the young girl's arm through hers and strolling with her down the mossy path.

Eldah had always been attracted to the banker's daughter, and was glad of the opportunity of knowing her better.

"How long will you remain, Miss Homesworth?"

"Just two weeks."

"O I am glad!" Lora exclaimed, impulsively, for we stay just that length of time. May I come and see you often?"

"I shall be most happy to have you, dear."

Eldah held the hand of the girl warmly as they parted.

Thus it chanced that Lora went often to the charmed spot. The lady, however, had been called away by a business telegram, so Lora was denied her desire to meet her, but she found great comfort in being with Eldah, and during their daily rambles together they formed a friendship that was destined to be lasting—a most helpful influence in Lora's life—for she gained much from contact with this strong, pure young woman of high ideals, yet who made them practical in her everyday life.

A few days previous to their departure, Mr. Alexander came down.

Lora told her father of Eldah and their delightful talks; also of the pretty cottage, and wished him to see it.



So insistent was she upon it, that just after sunset, Mr. Alexander set out alone for her favorite stroll.

A rustic bridge spanned the banks of a pretty little stream.



Just as he stepped upon the bridge, a lady approached from the other side.

Mr. Alexander was noting every beautiful effect in foliage, and they reached the center of the bridge before their eyes met.



"Theodora! God help me! Is it you?" broke from Mr. Alexander's lips in an impassioned cry.

Rooted to the spot by a force she could not contend against, the lady moved not, nor spoke. It seemed she scarcely breathed, so utterly was she unprepared for the shock.

How long they stood thus, silently, they never knew, but at last he moved nearer her, and standing still in silence so profound that the turbulent beating of their hearts could be heard, they gazed away from each other down the little stream, for just such a tiny one had divided them.

Still no word broke the stillness for many minutes; the spell of the years of suffering was upon them, they were powerless to move away, yet an impassable gulf held them from taking a step nearer—*that* would mean dishonor.

"O God, save us!" was the cry of the noble woman as she stood within touch of the hand of all hands she most longed to clasp.

"My God! My God! I can never leave her again!" was the passionate outcry of Mr. Alexander's tempest riven soul.

All the pent-up years of silent suffering rushed over him now. His self mastery, what did it avail him! All swept away in a moment, and he, the proud man of the world, stood trembling like a leaf shaken by the storm.

"My Angel, my Queen!" his heart wailed, but no sound escaped him.

The anguish was upon him deeper than he had ever known, for he realized now all her nobility



of soul, and that this pure, rare woman had loved him faithfully all these years.

There she stood at his very side, suffering, too, and he was the cause of all her lonely years.

The conflict became more fierce.

"I *must* take her in my arms for one, one little moment only!" he pleaded with himself.

"I owe it to her—I *will*!"

Everything else, his obligations to another, paled before the fire that seemed consuming him body and soul.

Meanwhile, unobserved by them, the sunset had faded; night and a tempest was fast closing them in.

The lady with quick penetration caught his rash feeling, and aroused to a sense of their danger, summoned courage to speak.

"Alex, night is fast approaching, and we must depart.."

Her well remembered voice thrilled him anew as it had down all the years of their separation.

In the wild tempest of soul he forgot all—wife, daughter, position and honor.

"Theodora! One moment, look in my eyes." He clasped her hand, while he felt her whole being convulsed in emotion rivaling his own. But the woman, the strong, pure soul that had lived down and above its own pain, rose to the need of the moment.

"Alex, listen to me. We met here by chance. Heaven has not prevented it. Shall we abuse the opportunity vouchsafed us?"

"Twenty years have elapsed since the old days



and this fatal night. God has kept my soul pure and I have been proud to know that your manhood was clean."

"Will you soil it, and drag me down from the height I have slowly and with such painful steps attained?"

"Will you forget all that you owe to another—position, honor and truth?"

"If so, then I have misread you and trusted in vain."

She drew back her hand. Her words had recalled his nobler self.

He stood erect and a degree of control was regained.

"All these years, Alex, your record has been unsullied. Mar it not now."

"We meet by the will of a Higher Power and not of our seeking. Let the hour not live blackened in our memories by remorse, but rather, may it be an incentive to cleanse all our being, so that when this earth struggle is ended, we, freed of these environments, may be white of soul to enjoy an Eden of bliss."

Mr. Alexander hung entranced on her words, and through his mind flashed a rapturous hope.

"Theodora," he said reverently, "May I dare hope in that far eternity, where earth ties are not, to share your companionship?"

She bent her face lower to hide the joy that flashed suddenly over it, while she softly whispered, "*You may!*"



The storm burst upon them and forbade further converse.

Mr. Alexander hurriedly accompanied the lady to her own door, and for one single instant, once more touched the hand of the woman to whom all his soul bowed in obeisance.

She was firm, poised, and true to the last; but when all was over, she fled to her room, and the storm in her soul overwhelmed her.

It receded again and again, only to break its wild billows over her more fiercely the next moment.

Hours passed unheeded, while the brave woman battled heroically alone with her grief.

Alone? Not alone, for One of calm Presence, though unseen by mortals, "stood in the midst," and when the passionate anguish had well nigh exhausted itself, she heard:

"But when in your Gethsemane dark woes shall  
press,  
My sleepless love shall cradle thee with peace and  
rest."

Rising and going to the window, she saw the rose tints of early dawn. One star alone shone brightly.

"It is the star of hope," she murmured, "and it means for *us* there will come a morning fairer than thought can picture."

"We will meet some fair morning in the land that knows no night; we will meet, bright star of hope, beneath your rays, and in the long eternity be undivided!"



## CHAPTER XLI.

Mr. Kingsley and his settlement work had moved steadily onward, broadening and lifting many lives to a higher plane.

The children whom Mr. Trueman led to his door have become very much to his life.

A motherly woman was secured to care for them, and they lived on at the settlement, daily creeping closer into the lonely heart of the heroic man who befriended them.

Jack's father never appeared, from the fact that for weeks he lay in that gruesome place called the morgue, among the unidentified dead.

In crossing a busy thoroughfare he had been seriously injured by a team, was carried to the hospital in an unconscious state, and passed out, leaving no clue behind.

Dimple had forgotten her sorrow and was the light of the place.

Little Jack was full of mischief and good spirits, but often his face would become sober as he said: "Why don't my papa ever come?"

Many times Mr. Kingsley's heart was touched to see him leave his play and stand at the window looking longingly down the street.

At one of these times Jack shouted: "O goody! There he is!"



He pounded on the glass and succeeded in attracting the attention of as disreputable looking a boy as even Mr. Kingsley was in the habit of meeting.

A shout of unfeigned joy came in response, and in a moment more, the most dirty of all youngsters bounded into the room and grasped Jack in his arms.

"O! I knowed I would find you yet, Johnny Jump Up!" administering a violent slap on the back as his manly expression of pleasure.

"Where's the baby?" he asked eagerly.

Mr. Kingsley brought her in, wondering very much what clue this might lead to, and extremely disliking to have his treasure contaminated by so much filth.

But Tom did not offer to touch her. He just gazed at her so admiringly that it touched Mr. Kingsley's heart.

"O but youse a daisy! Never seed one like youse. Can't youse 'member youse friend, him as brought you the bottle?"

"Say, mister, youse aint her dad, be youse?"

"No, I regret to say I am not, but tell me who you are?"

"Well, 'taint much to tell who I be. I be Thomas O'Ryan, newsboy and bootblack."

"When and where did you know these children?" inquired Mr. Kingsley, with deep interest.

Tom related how he found them and assumed their guardianship, and how he had searched brokenheartedly for "his kids" ever since.



The story could but warm Mr. Kingsley's heart to the boy. He questioned him kindly of his past and present, and before the interview closed, he promised him a suit of clothes if he would take a daily bath for one month.

At the end of the time Thomas O'Ryan was so completely transformed he did not recognize himself, when he caught a full length view in a mirror.

It was amusing to see the effect this had upon him. He walked slowly back and forth in front of the glass admiring himself beyond words.

At last he exclaimed: "Jiminy! Aint I slick? 'Spose it's me all right, but it don't look it," shaking his head doubtfully.

"Gee whiz! Won't the boys guy me. But I don't care, if she likes me, the little un."

"Maybe he might just let me kiss her cheek."

Mr. Kingsley recognized there was real merit in so kindly a heart as Tom had displayed to the unfortunate children, and sought to better his condition.

"I'll tell you, Tom. If you will go to night school three months, I'll take you in and make you my errand boy."

Tom listened amazed. Gee whiz! Aint my goose cookin' all right? 'I say, mister, I aint worth all youse doin', but I will be some day.

"Good!" responded Mr. Kingsley, much pleased with the boy's quick appreciation.

Mr. Kingsley had also secured a clean room for the lad, and to see Tom in proud possession, was indeed a rich treat.



The bed had a white spread which he took off and carefully folded up. He patted the comfort as he would Dimple, but when he got into the snowy sheets his delight knew no bounds.

"Gee whiz! Aint they famous? And to think *this is me!*"

He got up and smoothed them down lest a wrinkle should mar their immaculate making.

"There aint many so rich! I feel like a cab driver, so all spruced up. I aint no common gamin no more. I bet I show Mr. Kingsley a neat turn or two."

"White sheets! I've heerd of 'em! But I never 'sposed Thomas O'Ryan be that rich! There aint a speck of dirt on 'em, not anywheres," holding the light down and surveying them critically. "They're just as nice as he sleeps in, I'll wager."

"He's so good to my kids, too, and to all the small fry, that I'll be switched if I don't do something right handsum for him yet."

Tom could not sleep for hours, because of the newly acquired dignity of his position.

So another young life was being lifted from the mire and started in the right channel.

With his new treasures, and his work requiring every energy, still Mr. Kingsley was not satisfied, and often when "the cares that infest the day" had fled, he would take a stroll through the streets, trying to walk off his restlessness.

The more he sought to forget the inspiration and comfort Eldah's presence had been to him, the more persistently it remained.



He had not heard until recently that the engagement was broken.

After hearing it he went to his room, and going to the window looked up at the stars, his patient friends.

"Thank God! Thank God!" was all his lips could utter; but the expression on his face told how much it lightened his heart.

The careworn look vanished, and he seemed to grow younger as he stood there, still looking upward.

"I thought my sun had set. It has been blackest of night, but the starlight begins to peep through the shadows at last."

"I have been trusting in the Infinite Love to meet my human longing, and perhaps—perhaps—but I dare not hope so great satisfaction can be for me."

A less noble man would have instantly thought the release from Eldah's engagement gave him the right to seek her and ease his own heart hunger.

But with stern and admirable control, he held back his hope, and thought of her long struggle.

"She shall rest ere I invade her peace with another momentous question."

"Miss Dorothy told me she was not well. I have waited years. I can wait a little longer."

He closed his mouth firmly, but a new light shone in his eyes.

So while crowding back the sweet stirring of heart that set his blood bounding, he, stern and strong, sentenced himself to added denial, lest he add too much pain to a frail, delicate nature, for



intense happiness is sometimes pain. He "with steadfast, unspoken endurance, and the silence of will," held down his new hope and thought unselfishly of Eldah's long strain, and that she must need rest before he offered her even the deep joy which he hoped was for them.

Was not this the highest type of manhood?



## CHAPTER XLII.

“It is not so much what you say  
As the manner in which you say it,  
It is not so much the language you use  
As the tone in which you convey it.

‘Come here !’ I sharply said—  
And the baby cowered and wept !  
‘Come here,’ I cooed, and he looked and smiled  
While straight to my arms he crept.”

Mrs. Trueman repeated the above one day to Elsie, when she had been very impulsive and “didn’t see why things had to get so tangled when she meant all right.”

“But, Elsie dear, I feel that way, too, often, and the dearest friends may not see alike. Do you not know that our tones are sometimes misleading, when we say it is all right?”

“Well, I can’t make myself any different,” groaned Elsie. “I was born hasty and it is useless to hope. People often feel I’m scornful and severe when I am only in fun.”

Mrs. Trueman had much of Elsie’s high-strung nature and appreciated the girl’s difficulties.

In many little talks together Elsie found help, and was becoming far more controlled than formerly, although she did not realize her own growth.

“Character is something that we cannot build in a day,” Mrs. Trueman continued, “and only when



we are about ready to die, do we see that it takes an entire lifetime to build one. I am just as impulsive as you are, at times. I want to hurry my children on and make them see what is so clearly for their good; but I cannot do it. I am thrown back upon the fact that each soul must take its own gait. We cannot push the light in front of the eyes before they are ready for it, lest it dazzle them and they turn away from it."

"Our unfoldment is first the leaf, blossom, then the fruit. We cannot attain all we desire just at first. It is one step at a time, and if you overcome one thing, another comes easier."

"But I slip back so many steps where I take one onward," Elsie said, in a tone of discouragement.

"The old story of life and a disheartening view, were it not that there is One who is strong to help us, and He perceives not what we did, but what we strove to do. Just as we do with the children when we know they are trying to help us, though they make so many mistakes they hinder more."

Elsie's face lit up. "Oh, if that is the way He does, perhaps there is help for me."

"There certainly is hope for every soul who earnestly seeks to climb," Mrs. Trueman responded.

Eleanor was playing with her dolls, apparently inattentive to the conversation, but she raised her wonderful eyes to her mother's face: "Mamma, *What is a soul?*"

Katherine gathered her up in her arms.

The blue eyes looked thoughtful. "I cannot tell you now, baby mine, but you are the most blessed



infant I can imagine," and Katherine lapsed from the study of the building of character to the pleasure of a romp with the children, who came bounding into the room like skyrocket.

"Mamma, it's the disgracefulest thing, and I don't think it is very smart to tie a can to a cat's tail as Dan did," stormed Vera.

"And he chased the poor thing up a tree and called the dog to keep her there," added Gladys, indignantly.

It is cruel sport, but Dan hasn't anybody to teach him. Gladys, tell Dan I have something nice for him."

Dan soon appeared, looking sheepish and fully expecting a lecture.

Mrs. Trueman invited him in and showed him every courtesy, and ere the visit ended, had won the boy's heart. She did not refer to the incident, but paved the way for the talks that she had with him afterward.

This was the enlargement of the human love until it touched the surrounding territory, leaving a healthful impress on every life near it.

All true love must have this influence, for in its very nature is like the prism. It catches and reflects all of the rare colors, and throws its radiance over everything it comes in contact with, clothing the most obnoxious objects with fair tints.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

Mr. Templeton had been earnestly pushing the correspondence with Dorothea, and unable longer to resist the impulse to obtain a nearer view, had formed a most plausible excuse for visiting the University where the young lady shone as one of the leading lights.

Chagrined at not finding her upon the moment of his arrival, he pulled his handsome mustache savagely, and demanded somewhat curtly where he could locate her.

No one being able to enlighten him, he strolled away with dejection evinced in every movement.

An hour later he called again, with no better result.

He inquired with such anxious solicitude as to her probable whereabouts, that his listeners could scarcely repress a smile.

Having ascertained the addresses of several of her friends, he at once made the rounds, but alas, for his youthful ardor, not one could give him the desired information.

“Well, confound it, anyhow! Here I have taken this long trip, missed two days’ recitations and can’t find her!”

“What consummate folly upon my part not to have wired her. Of course she has an engagement



with some other lucky guy, whom I should like to decapitate this instant."

"And that debate is on for to-morrow night, so I dare not stay. Well, I will try once more and see if she has returned—and—" Mr. Templeton looked at his watch—"Gracious!" It's past calling hours, and those people will think I an escaped lunatic."

"I think this pretty severe on a fellow to lose so much time before exams and not even get a glimpse of her. But perhaps I can make it in the morning.

Mr. Templeton consulted his time card, and we fear gave vent to his feelings in stronger terms than is fitting to use in ears polite.

Meanwhile, Dorothea was at the Ladies' Boarding Hall in deep consultation regarding the next month's issue of the illustrious "Newtonian Star."

The editor and her staff, having transacted their weighty business, were lingering for the chat so dear to the girlish heart.

The rest had gone, leaving Myrtelius alone with Dorothea.

The latter seemed most impatient as she turned to question her friend. "What ails Mr. Kingsley, anyway? Why don't he settle things up and relieve the public mind?"

"In what way, pray? I supposed he was very strict in business matters?" replied Myrtelius, in a perfectly matter-of-fact way.

"Oh, I do not mean in dollars and cents. But why does he not settle up his matrimonial affairs,



when everything is fair sailing? Here it is at least four months since the engagement was broken."

Myrtelius laughed. "You talk like a professional matchmaker."

"I repudiate the charge with disdain!" the young woman retorted, "but I would like to see things fixed up in that quarter the way they belong, wouldn't you?"

"For my part, I think they were all right. The idea of Eldah's throwing over a chance to visit the old world and study all she wanted to, having all the money she wished and go just where she desired, is not to be despised. Mr. Richmond is a nice man, too. For my part, I think the break was a mistake."

"O you make me tired, Myrtelius! and we are too good friends to quarrel; but we never will see eye to eye along some lines. I do not place money above character!"

"Neither do I, but I can just tell you, I would never marry without it! I am not a humanitarian. I prefer 'books in the running brooks,' and to escape to nature, instead of spending my life working with the dregs of society, as Eldah will have to if she goes there. And she is too cultured a girl to bury her talents in that way."

"Isn't Mr. Kingsley too cultured a man to do likewise?" questioned Miss Dorothy, with lawyer-like directness.

"Doubtless he is, but he need not drag Eldah into it, too," answered Myrtelius warmly.

Myrtelius pushed back her hair from her intel-



lectual brow and her eyes sparkled defiantly, for Eldah was quite an ideal of hers. As she did so, something flashed on her hand.

Dorothea was upon her in an instant. "Why, you wicked creature! How dare you have such a thing as that and not tell me!"

Myrtelius' dark eyes fell beneath the searching gaze, which was more tell-tale than any answer could have been.

"Well! well! well! When on earth did this happen, and who is the unfortunate victim? Beg pardon, 'twas a slip, I mean fortunate. You may as well tell me instantly, for I shall never cease until you do."

Myrtelius smiled, but looked as contrary as possible, so we leave the astonished editor to make her own discoveries, fully convinced she is equal to the emergency.

Myrtelius, the bright and studious, had not only attracted the attention of one of the faculty, but actually captured the prize. There had been a secret understanding between them for some months, which was unsuspected by their nearest friends.

Now that Myrtelius was about to complete her final year at the University, they decided to astonish the students and professors by the silent, but all potent announcement, which now shone upon the young woman's hand.

Dorothea was never so puzzled in her life. "I did not think you would be the first to break up our old maid's frat, for you never had time for such nonsense."



"I did not have; it was because I cared so much for my books that it came."

"O the plot thickens! It must be some dry old professor who is always digging in classic lore."

"It's no such thing!" Myrtelius warmly retorted. "He is neither old nor dry, but I prefer a man older than myself, to whom I can look up."

"I like to see you warm up! Come! Are you going to tell me his name or not? I give you warning that I shall camp right here at your feet for the night, unless you impart the information."

"Well, you aren't so brilliant after all, as we thought you."

Thus put upon her mettle, Dorothea put her face in her hands and donned her intellectual cap. Suddenly the light shone in her eyes and she almost lifted Myrtelius from her feet and swung her around. "You don't mean to say it is Professor Barney?"

"I don't say anything about it!" But she did, for a deep blush told the story.

"Say! but you've made the hit, Myrtelius. When is it to come off?"

"There! Go off with your nonsense. You can pump all night, and I'll not tell you another word."

The young woman closed her firm mouth decisively.

"I don't care for any more, thank you. If I survive the shock and live to a ripe old age, it will not be laid at your door, for you all but ended my brilliant career. Good-night. I leave you to fair dreams, while I shall be obliged to spend a sleep-



less one, all because of your heartlessness in breaking up our sacred frat, for when once the ranks are invaded by Cupid, there's no telling what havoc he will work.

Dorothea reached home just ten minutes after Mr. Templeton's last call.

"Glad I missed him! Don't want to see him anyway," she said, in response to her friend's amusing account of his ardency.

But just the same, she was a trifle sorry to have missed the pleasure of having another talk with so fine a young gentleman, whose admiration had been becoming so pronounced in his letters, as to require much quelling of late.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

Mr. Alexander was entertaining a number of his most intimate associates in the business world.

Dinner was over and the guests were strolling about the spacious mansion, enjoying the fine pictures and many works of art which graced the home.

Every member of the party entertained the most cordial esteem for their host, and many were the encomiums showered upon him among little groups of the guests.

"Alexander is certainly the most fortunate man I ever met. What a charming wife he has, and such a lovely daughter! Tell you, Rhodes, that alone is sufficient to make him what he is," exclaimed one whose nuptial tie had proved a most unfortunate venture. •

"Yes, indeed, 'fortune favors the brave,' and Alexander deserves it all."

"He has been extremely lucky, for not only the goddess of Love has bestowed her choicest gifts upon him, but he has made a fortune, and done so honestly. Actually worked his way to the front by his own keenness and unfaltering energy. I believe there is nothing lacking to perfect his happiness."

"True, few lives hold so much."



This was the life reading of two of Mr. Alexander's closest friends, and how it deepens our admiration for the heroic soul who had missed life's holiest cup of happiness, yet had locked his life sorrow so closely within his own noble heart, that his nearest comrades dreamed not of it.

An animated political discussion was ensuing in another part of the drawing room. Mr. Rhodes and his friends joined the group.

"I tell you," said Mr. Alexander, "our peril is great, and I declare it to be my solemn conviction that unless purification can be effected in our government, that the fate of our fair country is sealed with a doom that is appalling! I am not a pessimist, but conditions are such that the facts must be faced, and the flag of our Union cease to be trailed in the mire and filth, if we are to retain down the ages, our position of leadership in all that is progressive."

"I have been greatly perturbed recently by the perusal of Lord Macaulay's speeches. Permit me to give you a few sentences that struck a chord in my being which vibrates still, because it is the alarm which needs to be sounded in our 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'"

"Speaking of the political mechanism of England, he says: 'It has a decayed part, but it also has a sound and precious part. It requires purification, but contains within itself the means by which purification may be effected. Even while I speak, the moments are passing—the irrevocable moments, pregnant with the destiny of a great people. *The*



*country is in danger. It may be saved. We can save it, and this is the time.'*

*'In our hands are the issues of great good and great evil, the issues of the life and death of our country! We are answerable to our consciences, to the memory of future ages, to the Judge of all hearts.'*”

A profound silence followed, until it was broken by one of the most brilliant lawyers of the day.

“We are all mariners tossed upon an unknown and unknowable sea, and it behooves the thinking manhood of the Nation to pause and consider whither are we drifting? What about our individual responsibility? How far does it extend? *That* has come home to me of late, and I am glad to know that the same feelings have stirred within your breast, Alexander.”

“Exactly, Harry, you’ve struck it,” replied Alexander, turning to his friend. “The responsibility is what has caused me hours of reflection of late. How far does it extend? ‘What am I, and whither going; what is my history and destiny? This mysterious soul that animates me, what is it?’ ‘Am I free or subject to inevitable necessity; if free, how are all my actions controlled and predetermined by a divine Providence? If not free, then how am I responsible?’”

“I said it was an unknown ocean upon which we sail,” Harry responded, “and none can read us the riddle of human life, but to return to the subject of our country’s peril. It is well to be optimistic. Without it, life would be hopeless. But



to close our eyes to the status of the case is madness, and unworthy of our citizenship. Lord Macauley is right. The power lies dormant within us. The victory is ours if we are not too heedless and lulled by apathy, drift onward toward the maelstrom."

A quiet man, who thought deeply, but seldom expressed his convictions, added: "Undoubtedly the time is ripe for this stirring up of individual responsibility. You have voiced the feeling within my heart, that the best manhood, and by that I do not mean the fanatics and cranks, but the thoughtful, keen minds which grapple with great problems of the day; in short, the clean backbone of the American government, needs arousing until the old time fire of patriotism shall be stirred into sufficient heat to illumine the conscience of our great and best citizens, that they may see the danger that menaces our republic through their neglect."

"True, very true," said a conservative man, "we have become so disgusted with graft and corruption of politics, that little by little we are giving way to the lawless element, because we find the atmosphere too repellant to breathe, and so become hopeless of its cleansing."

"Well!" Mr. Alexander brought down his hand firmly upon the table, "I have resolved that I shall no longer shirk the duties of citizenship. But that does not imply I am seeking an office. The fact is, I will *not* appear as a candidate upon any ticket, but I shall, from now on, work for better men to represent us."



"I confess that this dinner party was called to announce my reformation, and deep humiliation over past neglect. For when our wives and daughters are liable to insult in broad daylight, when our laws, for which our fathers laid down their lives, are despised and made of none effect, I consider I am being a traitor to the constitution of our great Union, if I remain indifferent to the imminent peril that threatens from non-enforcement of law."

"Many are calling for better laws. Well and good. Let them be the best that can grace any statute book. But I am convinced that we must prove our ability to enforce our present laws, or the time will come when anarchism will cause a revolution terrible as that of France."

"You are right!" said a number of the party. "We need an enlightened conscience."

"I repeat it; we *must* straighten out this tangle, or we will be financially and morally brought under its domination. I see the coils of the serpent stealthily creeping about the courts of Justice, and approaching our greatest American institution—the public school. And we men, blind and deaf to the situation, take our ease and leave the control to two elements, the lawless and the reformers. And while I do not follow the latter in all their agitation, it is my candid belief that in many points they are right, and deserve our substantial backing, for it is their effort, often most heroic, that arouses sentiment and clarifies our vision."

Rhodes, with several others, looked critically at



their friend as he took this pronounced stand, but they all so cordially respected him, that his view carried weight, and produced in more than one mind, deep conviction.

Only one of the party ventured to inquire as to Mr. Alexander's regeneration along reform lines.

"You wonder what has aroused me? I am unable to answer. I think it not due to any one thing, but to a succession of events. I believe it has been working within me at intervals, like the leaven, and that I am just now cognizant of its presence, and therefore can no longer shirk the issue."

After more earnest talk, the party broke up, each one having received an impetus toward higher standards of life.



## CHAPTER XLV.

Marshall Allen was at his desk in the bank. He glanced at the calendar in front of him.

"Pon my word! To-morrow is mother's birthday and I haven't a cent to get a present, and pay-day is five days off!"

A bright suggestion offered itself, as appeared from the clearing up of the cloud of disappointment that had lowered over the usually bright face.

He turned to his work, but some way could not settled to it. He glanced about. Only one other clerk was in the room, and his back was turned, besides, he was intent upon his task.

"Now is the time," said a voice. "Just borrow a couple of dollars and you can replace it in five days. That is perfectly legitimate, and can do no one any harm."

But deeper within the caverns of his being something said: "No, that looks like stealing."

"But it is not to be catalogued thus," another voice answered. "Stealing has a low motive, and yours is most praiseworthy. You want to cheer your good mother, and you can do it only in this way. It is not like taking it for yourself, and if you could not return it shortly it would be different. It is the only thing to be done, and now is the time. Do it at once before the rest come."



Marshall's training had been almost austere along the line of honesty, and never before had he been tempted to touch a penny not his own. But now the wiliness of the suggestion dazed his eyes for a little to the truth.

"What possible harm can come when I am honest and intend to repay it?"

"That is it," a voice, unheard by mortal ears, but to his soul sense spoke clearly, "you will replace it; do it at once and cheer your mother. Quickly or the opportunity will be gone."

Marshall, led on by the dazzle of his mother's pleasure, actually advanced a few steps to the pile of bills that lay upon the next desk.

"It is only a few days, you know," the urgent voice continued, "and you will be more than thankful you did not let the birthday of your dear mother pass unnoticed."

But, Marshall," a soft, sweet voice whispered, "Is it *right* to borrow that which is not your own without leave from anyone?"

"Certainly!" replied the bland voice. "It is your duty to comfort your lonely mother. Do it quickly!"

"Listen! Marshall Allen! You are treading the ground of a defaulter! Many began just so, tempted to borrow a trifle secretly, fully intending to return it, and they formed the habit, just as many contract that of debt, and awaken ere they are aware to the unwelcome truth that their names are sullied. Spurn the thought, Marshall!"

The boy rubbed his eyes as in maze.



"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, as he recoiled from himself. "To think I was so near taking what was not mine."

Humiliation hung over his spirits all day, and not until he had written it all to his mother did relief come.

"I declare! I feel utterly wanting in self-respect," the boy remarked, as he turned from the mirror. "Just like I could not look myself in the face."

Marshall was still in the cheap little room, saving money to go to the University. He hoped to make it by another year. He still kept up his work at night school, and was rising because of his good principles and perseverance.

"And to think how nearly I imperiled all!" he exclaimed, dejectedly.

"I never believed I would give a moment's thought to such an evil suggestion."

It was several days ere he recovered faith in himself. He avoided his friends, especially Mr. Alexander, feeling that his keen penetration must read his secret.

"Well, Marshall," said Mr. Alexander, one morning, "I have missed you several days. Come in and see me a few minutes."

Marshall's heart thumped mercilessly and he felt already disgraced.

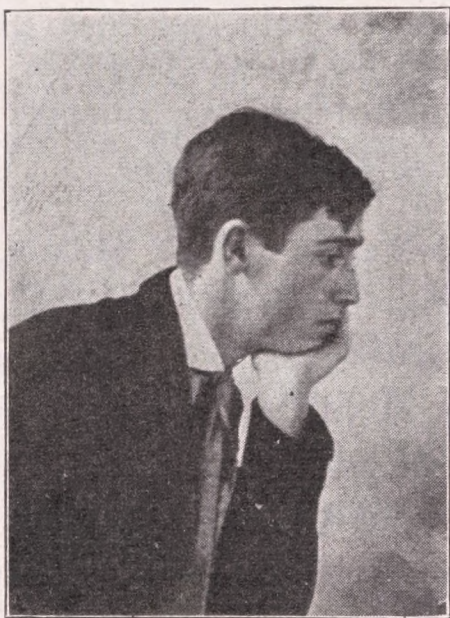
"Marshall, I have come to repose such confidence in your sterling honesty, that I am going to entrust you with a very important errand."

Marshall's face flushed. His conscience smote him



keenly. He sank upon the nearest chair and buried his face in his hands.

At length he mastered himself sufficiently to say: "Please do not trust me so much, Mr. Alexander; indeed I am not worthy."



Then with determination not to sail under false colors, but at all cost to have a clear conscience, he told the whole story.

His employer literally put his arms around him. His heart had never gone out so strongly to any young man before.

"Marshall, you have proven yourself worthy of my esteem by being true and great enough to confess your temptation. And because you have suffered so much humiliation, and feel so unworthy of my regard—yet were brave enough to tell all—I know you are a conqueror, and I love you, my boy."

The tears stood in Mr. Alexander's eyes as he tightened his arms about the lad. Marshall, with the warmth of his ardent boyish heart, gave an answering pressure that did both good.

He had always loved his employer, but now he adored him. He arose with new purpose in his face. "I shall be worthy of the honor of your trust, sir. *That* shall be my goal. I will work for



it day and night," he said, as he returned to his desk with his old happy heart.

Mr. Alexander was deeply touched by the story, and realized it had all come through an earnest desire to cheer his faithful mother.

He would not spoil the boy's conquest of himself by offering him a gift, but he would have the pleasure of brightening the life of so true a woman.

He penned a few words of appreciation of, and admiration for, her son. Words that were more precious than jewels of the first water could possibly have been to her. Then he asked her to accept from him a substantial birthday gift which he took pleasure in enclosing.

Tears of positive joy stood in his eyes as he sealed the letter.

"Lora is right," he mused. "I, too, want to do some real good in the world; and if so, it is high time I did it. I will see that the mother of such a son has a royal gift each birthday."

Marshall whistled all the way to his room that night, and experienced the high joy that only comes from self-mastery.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

The trip Mr. Bertram Templeton had taken, had not cooled his impatience to become better acquainted with the bewitching maiden, but rather heightened it.

Greek lessons and debating societies were much interfered with by his abstraction, and he hailed Spring vacation as a happy opportunity of pushing the conquest.

Having ascertained that the young lady would remain in town, he secured as much of her time as possible.

The night of his arrival, however, it must be confessed that Miss Dorothy somewhat dashed his ardency.

Indeed it was not pleasant for so polished and sought after a gentleman, to be quelled and treated with a light irony.

Every compliment he bestowed, instead of penetrating the heart of the fair, or bringing a flush of pleasure, was met with a proud indifference.

As he wended his way toward the hotel, after his first evening with her, he was thoroughly vexed.

"If she cannot make a fellow feel like 'small potatoes and few in a hill,' I never saw a person who could."



"But she *shall* drop that proud indifference to me, or my name is not Bertram Templeton."

"You queenly Rose! I'll bend your stem yet; see if I do not!"

"She has the figure of a Venus, but is enough to provoke a saint, and as I haven't any such blood flowing in my veins, it is exasperating."

Next evening they attended grand opera, and if Dorothea had charmed him before, her influence over him was greatly enhanced as she came into the room attired for the evening.

Perhaps she was more witty than usual, for who is not incited to do their best when exhilarated by the undisguised admiration of another?

Candidly Dorothea was not flirting or intending to lead on an enslaved victim. She simply was maintaining her dignity while studying the man before her.

She was not a weakling to fall prostrate before the first lover who presented himself. Not she!

"I glory in her spirit," he thought, "although it is fairly maddening the way she turns me down."

A volume was expressed in that *me*. So far, no one had dared resist the handsome senior, who had any amount of money to spend upon his lady love. Miss Dorothy was a pleasing novelty.

Dorothea, with true intuition, was reading him well.

"He has led captive altogether too many hearts for me to admire him greatly, although I admit he can be dangerously fascinating; but I believe I penetrate his nature. I would scorn to hurt a true





DOROTHEA



heart, but his is easily mended. It is more wounded vanity than anything else. He has always stormed every castle and carried all before him, and it is high time some one took a little of the conceit out of him. I shall teach him a lesson. Perhaps, if he is hurt a trifle, he may be more considerate of others."

This was the view point from which our heroine looked upon the man before her.

As for him, each day he realized more deeply that he had met his match.

He felt she read his very soul, knew all his weak points, and despised him for them.

But the more conscious he became of her disdain, the more angry he grew.

He vowed he would not give up the siege, for in spite of numerous previous attachments, none had so completely enthralled him.

Thus the vacation week flew by, filled with drives, parties, opera, and walks.

Still, as he boarded the train for home, he was obliged to admit himself farther off than ever from the goal.

And in all honesty, we must confess that not one compunction of conscience stirred Miss Dorothy's breast.

She had enjoyed her power, as every woman has done, from mother Eve down the centuries, but she had not abused it, for when Mr. Bertram Templeton took his departure he knew, although he would not admit it to himself, that his fate was sealed.



She would not keep him in suspense for mere pleasure and fascination, so she had made it very evident that it was a hopeless chase.

"I think I have punished him somewhat for the way he has toyed with susceptible hearts; now he may go," she said, as she watched his retreating form.

"Such unparalleled egotism I never before witnessed! As if all womankind are going to worship *his* majesty!"

Dorothea settled down to school life and totally eschewed all sentimentality.

Indeed, all through her University course she had frowned upon anyone bold enough to intrude upon her attention.

Yet she was very popular with the boys, who thought of her as a true friend and comrade.

"I worked my way every inch myself, that I might come, and now I am here for business. I am going through the University, and mayhap be sentimental afterward," she said to some one who commented upon her avoidance of all friendships that pointed to anything serious.

A worthy resolve, and she had possessed sufficient strength of character to adhere to it.

"I am just afraid Dorothy never will fall in love," remarked one of her girl friends, "she is so porcupiny with gentlemen, and keeps them at the North Pole."

"And I prophesy," responded one of the older girls, "that she will grace a home of her own long before most of us do."



"I don't see how anyone can reach the heart of this rose," said another, "for every approach is sentineled with thorns."

"No ordinary person will, but I believe she will be caught unawares."

"Time will verify," answered the unconvinced maiden, as she departed.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

The Trueman home was ablaze with light, and the half drawn curtains revealed a pleasant company of friends.

It was one of Katherine's little "at home" affairs, in which she was entertaining one of the leading musical artists of the city. The company had also been specially favored this evening, for Professor Van Drummel had brought with him a noted composer from over the seas.

All had been charmed by the rendition of some very classical pieces.

It seemed the violin had indeed found its master interpreter, as throbbing, soul inspiring music, quickened all hearts.

Professor Van Drummel had received many congratulations upon his friend's art, and bowing gracefully he seated himself at the piano for the closing number.

The encomiums showered upon the violinist, inspired so much envy in the Professor's breast, that he resolved to conquer the audience and carry off the final honors of the evening, so he lost himself entirely in his selection, and held all spellbound.

As the party dispersed, many praises were given Professor Van Drummel.

"Such a courtly gentleman!"



Katherine shared the general feeling that they were most fortunate in securing so talented and refined a teacher as the instructor of their daughters.

Professor Van Drummel's faultless courtesy had gained an entrance into the house of wealth. For years he had been the teacher of Lora Alexander and many other sweet young girls, whose careful parents felt deeply grateful that they could entrust beauty and innocence to his care.

Gladys Trueman was slightly indisposed, and her mother suggested that Noble secure something from the drug store before retiring.

"Wait a moment, Professor, and I will accompany you," Mr. Trueman said, as the gentleman was preparing to depart.

Mr. Trueman could not define it, but he never felt perfect trust when with the admirable gentleman. To-night they walked on, chatting pleasantly, and he was mentally upbraiding himself for his secret distrust, when suddenly from out a dark doorway near the store, sprang a figure, and ere they were aware, had caught Professor Van Drummel by the throat with a deathlike grip, while a pair of fierce black eyes, flashed for a moment so that Mr. Trueman recoiled from their glare.

"Ha! I have you at last in my power, have I?"

The slight figure, for it was a woman's, flourished a knife dangerously near, still keeping her clutch upon his throat.

Professor Van Drummel, with one well aimed blow, thrust the woman from him, and escaped



down the street before Mr. Trueman had recovered his senses.

He turned to the prostrate figure and was about to assist her to rise, when she looked at him with those burning eyes.

Where had he seen them before? He knew them instantly, but where had he encountered them?

"Are you *his* friend?" the woman demanded, "Or are you one of those he has deluded as he has the rest of us? O that I ever let him go! He is a fiend in human shape, a demon clad like an angel of light. No, I'm not insane. I am telling the truth, so help me God! Where have I seen you before?" she questioned. "O I know you now! You are Mr. Kingsley's friend!"

Mr. Trueman started. "Yes, indeed, but *who are you?*"

"*Who am I?* Who? A creature God forgot, a human being once, perhaps. I know not what I am now, but once I was a little child. And listen, that man, your friend, perhaps? But I pray not, for you're too good to step on such as he. *That man* found I had a voice, could warble like the birds. Yes, I sang from morn till night. I was happy then, even though I never knew what kindness was from anyone but him. He was so good to me. He heard me singing and stopped beside the window where I sat, a careless child of twelve."

"He said: 'Why, what a voice you have! I'll teach you music and you'll charm all hearts.' I clapped my hands for pure delight. He told me where to go to take my lessons. I went and he



taught me every week, and was my only friend. I worshiped him as only childhood can adore. Listen! Don't leave me till I tell you all; then see if *I* need locking up, or *he*! For two years every week I took my lesson. Oh! 'tis terrible to say to those polite, how he sought in every way to conquer my poor little heart. He, the only one in all the world who showed me kindness. I lived and breathed in him! He was light itself. Yes, all the world to me, and had me so completely in his power, I would at any moment have laid down my life for his dear sake. Was it so very strange that I yielded up what now I know was worth more than life?"

"Listen! When only fourteen years, I had a long, long illness. I knew not what it meant, but when I wakened to full consciousness, I found beside me a tiny child. They said: 'It's yours!' and pointed at me the finger of scorn, and then I knew all; the horrible truth flashed over me! And I begged for him to come, but he *never* came! Oh, what weary, weary days I waited and watched for him!"

"Listen, O listen! There's just a little more. After that they called me 'mad,' but when all the sun went out of heaven and only night remained which held no stars, was it strange that I was wild?"

"For still I loved that man and drooped like a broken flower because he came not. I sang no more, but listened, waited for him, watched every form that passed in vain hope. I heard at last



that he had moved away, and then hope died within me. Wait, I'm nearly done."

"I had a little sister who was bright and good. She went to Mr. Kingsley's and learned so many things. They tried so save her from becoming like me. I hoped they could with all my heart, but one time—when ma drugged me—I turned against them and helped drag her *back to hell!* So now I'm *doomed*—a lost, lost creature!"

She buried her face between her hands, and rocked back and forth in agony.

Trueman could endure no more and moved away, but she detained him. "Wait only one moment more, till I tell you all. After I had *sold* my little sister, because I was stupid with drink, I awoke to find *this man*, who walked the streets with you to-night, had sent a friend of his to *buy my little Marion!*"

"'Twas not enough that he should blight my life, but he must sully little Marion. And how she fought! I wonder the great God—you pious folks believe in—did not strike him dead."

"And now she's gone! gone! Ask him where? He knows."

Mr. Trueman was speechless with horror.

"Hattie," he said at length, "go straight to Mr. Kingsley and tell him this. Perhaps he may save her yet."

"No, I can never face Mr. Kingsley again. He hates me as I deserve, for helping Marion to her ruin, but God knows I was crazed with liquor when I did it, and if any penalty they could inflict



would give Marion back pure as she was, they might torture me to death. I'd not complain.

"Now you know all, but if you have daughters, keep them safe from *him*."

She arose wearily and turned away. Only eighteen, but bent and wan, a wreck of girlhood.

Mr. Trueman was so shocked that he found himself at home with his errand forgotten. His blanched face frightened Katherine, who was already alarmed over his prolonged absence.

"Tell me quickly, Noble. You look ill," she said, anxiously.

"I forgot the medicine, Kate."

"Never mind, she is sleeping well, and will not need it till morning; but tell me what has happened?"

Noble related the whole pitiful tale and Katherine grew more and more excited.

"Do you know, Noble, I haven't felt trustful lately when alone with the Professor. A shiver went over me several times when he turned my music. And only think how freely the children have been left with him, and Vera was such a pet of his! It makes a chill of horror strike my very soul."

Next morning Noble 'phoned for Mr. Kingsley to meet him at luncheon, where he told the story.

Kingsley was thoroughly aroused.

"We'll have the bloodhounds of the law upon his track before another night."

"Two lives are enough to be sacrificed without



his being entrusted with all the fairest buds of the city."

Ere the interview concluded, it was agreed that Mr. Kingsley put the affair in the hands of an able lawyer, a friend of theirs, who was ever a defender of the right, and who possessed sufficient moral courage to push the case.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Mrs. Trueman and Elsie had gone shopping. Gladys was caring for Eleanor.

Two years have elapsed since we first peeped at the Trueman nursery, and the baby is now three years old. Her development has been flower-like and beautiful.

Gladys is lost in the depths of a story book, and Eleanor amusing herself with her blocks, talking all the time. "If I want a new life, I must be good. 'Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right,' " she repeated soberly, remembering last Sunday's golden text. "But I don't want to go to Heaven; no, not a bit!"

Gladys, though deeply engrossed, could not be totally oblivious to the last remark.

"Why not, Babe?"

" 'Cause, you see, I'm 'fraid my papa and mamma won't go."

"Why, Babe! They will go if anyone does," replied Gladys, loyally.

"Vera can't go." Eleanor shook her little head while her blue eyes grew larger. "No, her can't go 'cause her wifes cows."

"O yes! God 'cused her 'bout that long ago. God isn't hard to please a bit, if you're awful sorry 'bout things. He always lets you off then."





ELEANOR



Gladys resumed her reading. Presently she heard a sweet little voice in the next room. She peeped in and saw Babe standing on a chair near the telephone. Gladys waited to see what she would do.

"Hello!" she said, in the softest baby tones imaginable, "Is this Heaven? Is God there? I'd like to speak to Him, please."

Another pause. "I'm sorry for all Eleanor's badness. Will you 'cuse her, God?"

"You precious angel!" Gladys clasped her in her arms just as mamma came in.

"Babe thought she could talk to God through the telephone, mamma," Gladys whispered confidentially. "Isn't that funny?"

A happy light shone in Katherine's eyes. "No, not funny, just sweet;" and she divided the hugs between the two.

Just then Vera came bounding into the room with such rosy cheeks and radiant spirits, it was a delight to behold her.

"O mamma! Benjamin Franklin got away from the garbage man, who pounded him so one day—I saw him do it—and I just yelled, 'Bravo! Ben! Good for you! Hurrah!' with the rest of the boys, and then we ran about a mile after poor Ben to cheer him on. The man couldn't catch him, and he *looked* bad words after us. May be he said a few, and shook his fist, but I ran as fast as I could to get out of hearing his wickedness. So I guess it didn't affect me any," she added, seeing a serious look on her mother's face.



"You see, mamma," she added, cheerily, "there is a bright spot in all your troubles about me, and that is that the bad things I hear don't stick to me long. They slide off after a few minutes, and I forget all about them and am ready for something else."

A silence.

"Aren't you glad poor old Ben got away from his cruel driver, mamma?"

"Certainly, I am, only I am not sure I like to see my daughter racing down the street with a crowd of boys, hooting like they always do."

"But, mamma," said Vera, diplomatically, "if you only could have seen how cute that horse was! He turned his head and saw the man disappear around the corner, and then he just limped off with a knowing twinkle in his eyes, as much as to say: 'I'll show the old fellow a thing or two,' and his poor old lean sides just looked *tickled*! I felt so glad for him I just *had* to cheer him on!"

"I know, dear, and am delighted to have you sympathize with the poor old horse, but you are growing to be such a big girl to tear madly down the street with a crowd of boys for a mile or so."

"Well, Mamma Trueman! Didn't your feelings ever get the better of you, and cause you to shock *your* mother?"

Katherine felt this appeal strike home.

"Yes, Vera, they did get the best of me, and I understand how you feel; but you have to begin some time to be less heedless, and I want to help



you so that people will not be disgusted with my fly-away."

"Oh, I will make them like me, spite of my misdeeds," Vera smiled confidently.

"Yes, some people you will, and others will criticise your mother because she did not train you better."

Vera sprang to her mother's side. "If that's it, mamma, I'll try to be more better."

"Ladylike, you mean."

"Yes, I shall *have to be*," said Vera, with such a profound sigh, and a martyr like expression upon her merry face, that mamma and Gladys laughed outright.

"You see, Vera, when children are naughty, people say: 'Well, I think their parents have not much control over them, or they would behave better.'"

"O dear! *Do* they?"

"Why, yes, people always blame the mothers when their children act badly. When I see a nicely trained child, I think he must have a fine mother."

Vera looked sober. "Oh, I wish you would punish me some other way, *hard*, but *don't* talk *good* to me, mamma; I just can't endure it! It makes me so uncomfortable. Think up some other way of correcting me, please. I don't want to make people think you're to blame."

Mamma knew she had touched the right chord on Vera's soul instrument, and the vibrations would do her more good than any other method she could have chosen.



Vera went out to the swing with a quiet step that meant unwonted thoughtfulness.

Mamma turned to Eleanor. "What have you been doing, Baby?"

"Playing Daniel."

"What do you know about him?" asked mamma, much interested. "Who was he?"

"O! he was the Purposer."

"The what?" Mamma looked perplexed.

"Why 'Daniel *purposed* in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat,'" the small lady quoted glibly the Sunday school lesson of a few weeks previous.

Mrs. Trueman drew a quick breath as she gathered her darling in her arms.

"Three wonderful little beings to train for life that never ends!" she mused.

"I suppose they are no more remarkable than many other children, but they are a perfect revelation to me, and I am conscious of the need of Higher help than mine to guide them."

Thus through her happy motherhood, Katherine, looking into the pure, earnest eyes of her children, was being led to a deeper longing for a higher life.

Just so in different ways, many are drawn upward. "The paths they are many, the end it is one."

A perfect Teacher is giving each soul, the world over, just the right lessons needed to perfect and round out character.

Some look with longing eyes toward such a training and environment as found in the Trueman



home, while they covet the joys of this happy fire-side. But still the sigh, hold back the yearning, for over every life with its most difficult lessons an angel writes the truism that *God knows best*, and gives the discipline needful to perfect the symmetry.

*We have a God to see us through our earthly pilgrimage!*

And in such Care, we may be confident that everything needful for our best development *will* be given. "All that is for thee will gravitate to thee or thou to it."

Some may tread a rough and toilsome pathway, but some day we will understand, and rejoice that a wise Teacher withheld joys we longed for, but in the after glow of life, we know would have proved detrimental to our soul's unfoldment.



## CHAPTER XLIX.

The Delta Tau Delta and their sister fraternity, had been at annual camp just a week, when one sultry day, a dusty, travel-stained gentleman was left at the door of the summer cottage.

He paid the liveryman and deposited his belongings upon the porch, as if he had come to stay. He sprang up the steps eagerly.

"Where has everybody gone?" he queried of the dusky individual, who seemed sole custodian of the camp.

"Oh, they're off for a day's climb up the mountain, and will not be back till nightfall. Come to join the camp?"

"Yes," answered the stranger, the pleasure dying out of his face.

He pulled out his watch. "Only ten a. m.! Six or seven hours to wait at the very least," while his impatience could hardly be curbed during the whole journey.

"Can you tell me which way they went?"

"I dun no. 'Pears like 'twould be hard to foller anybody, wid all dem tracks crisscross. I aint gwine to risk sendin' nobody to 'struction, not knowin' whedder they be prepared, sendin' dem up dat ere mountain. You best lie down and rest



a spell. Nice fishin' over there in dat ere mountain stream. Day'll pass 'fore you knowed it."

The newcomer looked little pacified, though slightly amused.

"Well, all things can be borne! I might as well make the best of it. Where is some water, Sambo? I'll clean up and look a little civilized, even if there are not any ladies present."

The ablutions performed, the gentleman strolled out and found a desirable seat under a fine old tree, and became lost in meditation.

It was evident his mood was most impetuous, for he consulted his watch very frequently, and his face betrayed a whole panorama of feelings.

A light came and went between moments of earnest reflection. At times, he whistled the most merry of tunes, then lapsed into profound silence. Again he paced the path, or stretched at full length upon the mossy bank.

He gazed with admiring eyes at the myriads of leaves that formed a canopy above him, while a solemn gladness came over him, as if too deep for speech.

Only once did a look of sadness mingle with the other tell-tale expressions which flitted across his countenance.

At length the western shadows began to make pleasing pictures on the grass, and as he noticed them his face brightened.

But when the sun sank lower, and lower, he became more restless than ever.

At last he heard the merry shouts of the return-



ing party, and sprang down the path to meet them, as if electrified.

The surprise was a complete one, for it is needless to say that he was unexpected. The welcome was most royal from all save one. Eldah seemed stricken dumb with astonishment, for she merely bowed and did not extend her hand.

She escaped to the girls' tent as soon as possible, and happily found it empty. She buried her face in the pillows—she was face to face with what?

Something thrilled deeply within her, that she had never experienced before. She felt fettered by a strange new power. What was it that moved her to the most remote depths of her being?

A wild throbbing of heart seized her, till with resolute and proud command, she mastered its fluttering, made her toilet, and returned to dine. A beautiful flush tinted her cheek, and her eyes, when not veiled by downcast lashes, revealed a new look.

The group about the table was a merry one, and the evening camp fire quite hilarious.

Only two were often silent while the rest were the merriest.

Just once did their eyes really meet, and Eldah withdrew hers the moment she realized where they had strayed; but not soon enough to escape the electric dart that seemed to penetrate her like a strain of sweet music.

The party separated somewhat earlier than usual because of their hard day's climb, and very shortly the tired mountaineers were enjoying balmy



Nature's sweet restorer. Eldah alone found herself awake.

She knew the coming of the guest meant just one thing, and her whole being felt an ecstasy undreamed of before. At last she fell asleep with a rare expression upon her sweet face.

The next morning she did not steal out as she was wont to do for her solitary walk, for woman's reserve and pride, caused her to shun any seeming invitation.

The newcomer of yesterday, awakened early and was out in the morning freshness. He felt the exhilaration of the mountain air, he seemed glad with a great soul inspiring gladness, and returned to camp with a healthful glow and such superabundant spirits, that all who were near caught the reflection.

Eldah was uncommunicative and had only addressed him indirectly. Still, whether in his presence or apart, she was conscious of some strange power taking possession of her.

She was careful to keep closely surrounded by the girls, so that a whole day had slipped by, ere her friend had been fortunate enough to snatch a moment with her alone.

All the gentleman had gone fishing, as Eldah supposed, so she ventured to stroll a short distance alone. She never had longed more intensely for solitude, but feared to seek it.

She was about to seat herself, when around a curve in the path, she saw a gentleman coming towards her.



She felt an insane desire to fly, but the absurdity banished the thought. Besides, it was too late.

Mr. Kingsley stepped quickly to her side. "Miss Homesworth, I have waited for an opportunity to see you alone."

Eldah wished that she had been sufficiently undignified to fly.

"Will you take a stroll over our dear old path with me tomorrow?"

Eldah maintained her downward gaze, but questioned: "At what time?"

"Any time that you wish. Only say you will come."

She raised her truthful eyes, but not to his face. "Let it be about three, and I will go alone."

She was the calm, self-possessed woman once more.

Just then the girls, keen-eyed and alert to notice everything in connection with these two, came up, and they all went on together. Mr. Kingsley entertained them with pleasant anecdotes.

Dorothea was the last to approach. Indeed, since Mr. Kingsley's arrival, she had held aloof and refrained most heroically from teasing.

Anyone capable of reading her, could see that she was anxious, almost holding her breath, as it were.

She stole furtive glances at Eldah, and noted every expression of Mr. Kingsley's face when he glanced her way.

"Miss Dorothy," he said, as she joined the group, "Will you show me the way to the new spring you've discovered?"



"Delighted to do so, Mr. Kingsley," and they marched off with tin pails keeping time to her lively chatter.

Mr. Kingsley could but admire this wholesome girl from the prairie state, with her own breezy freshness still clinging to her.

Then she was Eldah's friend, and he felt a depth in her that few discerned, deceived as they were by the fun loving surface.

Dorothea's gay manner subsided the moment they were alone. She felt he had something of weight to say, and wished most cordially to assist him in any way that she could; so she put on her serious air and waited.

"Let us sit here and chat awhile, if you do not object?" He seated himself on a log.

"They are not in any hurry for the water, are they?" he asked.

"No, they will not want it for an hour," she replied, consulting her watch.

Mr. Kingsley had imposed so severe a repression upon himself, that he felt he could bear it no longer. He must say something of it to this trusty young woman before him.

"Miss Dorothy, I have always esteemed it a privilege to call you friend. I know that your sense of honor is keen; also your woman's penetration has long divined my secret."

He paused, waiting for a word from her.

"Mr. Kingsley, my intuition has indeed read your heart, and my sympathy been with you ever since we were here two years ago."



"Thank you. I felt it, but am glad to have you confirm it. Now tell me," he asked eagerly, "am I mistaken? Do you think after all it is hopeless? I felt certain of victory yesterday, but the longer our talk is delayed, the fainter my heart becomes. Tell me, that I may steel my heart for the worst. Do you think Richmond has any hold upon her heart, or ever had?"

Dorothea's face brightened. "No, he never had! I can put you at rest there. I think Eldah has suffered quite as keenly as you have."

The earnest man before her seemed to grow strong under her words.

They were silent for a time, each thinking deeply.

At length Mr. Kingsley ventured another question.

"Do you think that since she bade him hope no more, that she might give a different answer to another?"

He did not raise his eyes, but said it in deep humility, as if it were too sacred a gift to profane by any common words.

Dorothea responded with sweet womanly dignity in a low voice, without looking up, "Yes, I think she might."

"Can you go beyond that, and give any greater hope?"

He looked into her face searchingly.

Dorothea met his gaze frankly. "I am not positive, but I think so. Eldah never confides in anyone. I believe, though, that all will be well."



Mr. Kingsley's heart gave a great surge of gladness.

"Then will you befriend us to-morrow? Keep the girls and the gentlemen occupied at a good safe distance, so they will not intrude on our talk? If you will do this, it will be a service that can never be forgotten."

A twinkle came back to Dorothy's eyes, as she said mischievously: "I will require the same at your hands, sir, if ever circumstances demand."

"And you shall certainly have my most cordial assistance," he said, warmly.

As they neared camp, they began a playful conversation, and when they entered it, none dreamed of the serious nature of their talk.

"If Eldahrema turns him down, I'll disown her for my friend!" asserted the fair damsel, as she scrutinized Eldah's face. "He is noble enough to win any woman he might aspire to."

"I wonder what I can think up to take the rest off until the affair is brought to a happy conclusion?"

"What is the matter with Dolly to-night?" some one asked.

"That is just what I have wondered!" echoed several.

"These spells with her are ominous," said Geraldine. "They portend a fresh breaking out of her spirits that will be dangerous to surrounding personages."

"Geraldine is right. It is merely the lull before



the tempest. I am just resting for future warfare. Tomorrow, my friends, be prepared for the worst."

Dorothea strolled out to the tent whence she had observed Eldah disappear.

She found her lying face downward on the bed. She laid her hand on hers, but said never a word.

Eldah did not stir, but felt quieted by her friend's calm, strong presence.

After a few moments of silence, Dorothea laid down beside her. Still neither spoke, but each divined something of what was passing in the heart of the other.

"It is about time for supper, Eldah. Are you ready?" Dorothea asked, with an unusual tenderness in her voice.

"When a strong nature grows tender, it is the most fascinating thing in the world," so the proud girl seemed to Eldah, as she went out to join the rest, with her hand closely clasped in that of her friend's.

Eldah had always been fond of Dorothea, but never had she seemed so bewitching to her as now, and she thought with a pang: "How can he ever have eyes for anyone else when she is present? She is so blooming and bright, and then her fine physique could but attract any one. Perhaps I have sent him from me, and now he has turned to this bright star."

She saw several glances of understanding exchanged between Mr. Kingsley and Dorothy during the evening, each one causing a peculiar sinking of her heart.



She felt no resentment, for her soul was too pure and true for hatred to gain an entrance. Besides, she loved her friend too dearly for that; but as the evening advanced, her spirits sank lower and lower, until she excused herself early, having that ever available plea of a headache, which too often is a convenient cover for the heartache.

"Why had she been so dull? How extremely suited they were to each other! Dorothy had so often taken his part, too, she surely could care for such a man as he! She remembered that he had always admired her wit. How happy they looked after they returned from the spring. Then how strangely thoughtful she was after dinner. Perhaps, too, she wanted to tell her the secret when she came to her. She was so gentle and subdued, so unlike her off-hand self. True, he had asked *her* to go for the walk to-morrow, but they were such old friends, he might want to confide to her first, his growing feeling for her friend. How blind she had been! But how gratefully she remembered that she had held herself in reserve, and not gone for her usual stroll, or given him any inkling of her interest. She would meet the occasion with dignity to-morrow and not be taken by surprise. How glad she was that she had been put on her guard. They should never know it mattered to *her*."

After many hours of restless tossing, she sank into a troubled sleep, so different from the happy dreams of the night previous!



## CHAPTER L.

Dorothea laid awake far into the night, devising some plan by which she could keep the crowd at a safe distance.

"O, I *know*! We will have a corn roast, and fish fry, down by sunset rock. Eldah will slip off and not be missed until we are beyond reach."

Dorothea was her spicy self next morning, and her plan for the day received with a burst of enthusiasm.

At two p. m. a more lively party never set off for a day's outing. The sky was cloudless. Just breeze enough to make walking a delight, and they had almost reached their destination ere Eldah was missed.

"Of all things! Where is Eldah?" exclaimed the chaperon, as she looked over her flock of girls.

"Why, Dorothy, I thought she was with you?"

"So she was," Miss Dorothy replied, shutting her lips like the Sphinx.

"Where did she go?" several demanded.

"Couldn't prove it by me. She turned off another path, and said she would rather study plant life than take this long tramp." Dorothy gave the chaperon a look out of the corner of her eye that was comprehended. Then she diverted the public mind next instant by some of her witticisms.



Meanwhile no one had thought of Mr. Kingsley's absence. It was not until they had settled down for the evening meal, that the gentlemen discovered Kingsley, too, was an absentee. Professor Barney and Myrtelius were strangely (?) the first to grasp the significance of the missing pair, and exchanged glances of understanding.

But the rest soon caught the situation, all but Dorothea, who remained perfectly stoical on the subject, and refused to see any connection whatever between the absence of the two.

The jokes, however, flew round the circle. "We will have it in for Mr. Kingsley all right," said the gentlemen. "If we do not roast them good when we get back, for playing us this quiet little trick, etc."

Still, Dorothea was obdurate, and amused the whole party by her blindness to the situation.

"Dixy is among the uninitiated," some one laughingly remarked, "but just wait until her turn comes and we will sit up nights, collectively and individually, to pay her for her pranks."

Dorothy tossed her head. "You will not have the opportunity. I promise you that I shall outwit you all when I make the fatal leap."

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But to return to Eldah. When she left Dorothy and wandered down the well remembered path to the old trysting place, she felt anything but happy, for the shadow that had touched her the night previous, did not lift with the dawn of the day.

Very different were the feelings that animated



Mr. Kingsley, as he wended his way to the dear old spot, and stood awaiting her arrival with a heart so full of tumultuous joy, it seemed he could hardly breathe at times.

At last he heard her light step on the grass and sprang to meet her. His whole face radiated his gladness, and but for her newly awakened conviction that she had been sought out to be made a confidante of, she would have read the truth without a word.

But she met him with the dignity of a well poised young woman, determined that he should not surprise from *her* the true state of her heart. So she lifted serene eyes and asked him with perfect composure: "Am I on time?"

Her manner chilled his heart with forebodings. After all, had he made no impression upon her?"

"Yes, but the time seemed too long."

Eldah began to talk of a recent discovery in science, in which she was interested.

He listened abstractedly, but still she rambled on about so many diverse subjects, that he began to fear his golden opportunity would slip away.

An excellent conversationalist was Eldah, and she compelled the admiration of her hearer, even while he fervently wished she would cease.

"If he wants to tell me of his feelings for her, why on earth don't he hurry up about it," thought Eldah, impatiently. She was becoming weary of the farce, and at length came to a full pause, for his eyes were bent upon her so intently as to almost compel silence.



He had led her into a perfect wilderness of beauty, a deep glen below them with all the sweet wild things of the woods; ferns, flowers, and mossy banks, were near them.

Though the silence lengthened, neither felt it embarrassing, in fact, it was far more restful than the forced conversation had been. Their souls grew hushed by the profusion of beauty and stillness.

But the great-hearted man, who had loved patiently, so silently for years, could restrain his feelings no longer.

"Miss Eldahrema, I brought you here to share a secret that I have long wished to confide to you."

Eldah came out of her reverie abruptly. She had been happy again, sitting there by her friend as of old. In the silence their souls were near, but his remark recalled the old pain, so she steeled her heart accordingly, while her outward bearing became somewhat formidable to the eager lover.

"I must know the worst," he thought, with sinking heart.

"Miss Homesworth!" Her dignified and unapproachable manner caused him to drop the more familiar title. "You surely must have some intimation of my secret, although I have guarded it carefully."

"Yes, I presume I have," Eldah replied, composedly, seeing she must assist him, or he would never be able to come to the point. "I always knew you admired her, but never saw it so plainly as since your arrival. I am sure she is fitted in



every way to make you happy, and I know you will be greatly envied if you are so fortunate as to win her."

"Eldah! Eldah! What *are* you talking of? This is certainly Greek to me. Of whom are you speaking?"

Eldah felt a terrific rebound of her heart as he called her name, and such a soul bewildering thrill, that caused her to feel that she should die from a strange excessive joy that pervaded her very being.

Then the blush that enveloped her, told the truth to the ardent man who waited before her.

"Tell me," he insisted, although almost too deeply happy for utterance, "What did you think?"

Eldah was intently studying a leaf she held in her hand, and without raising her eyes, answered: "I thought, of course, you had long since admired our bright Dorothy, and wished to ask my advice about winning her."

Mr. Kingsley felt the mist between them rolling forever away.

"So I do admire her; but it was not of your friend that I came to speak."

He bent an eloquent look upon her downcast eyes as he reached over and took her hand. "It was for this priceless gift I came."

And the old, old story was told again, while the floodgates were lifted, the pent-up suffering of both gave way at last, and thus "the tempest of sorrow met the tempest of love" at the close of



the day, and for time, and for eternity, two strong, noble lives were blended.

Love seldom crowns man more worthy, or woman more pure.

With the peace of God lying all about them, the beauty of the forest casting its bewitching spell over them, the birds caroling love songs above them, and a love that had been chastened by the Refiner's fire, and left but a pure flame burning in their hearts; these two rare souls met at last, never to be divided.

No spot could have been more hallowed for such a coronation.

The time passed on wings, and the deepened shadows warned them that night had come and they must return to camp.

Their walk homeward through the deepening twilight, feeling that blessed oneness of soul, repaid for all past suffering.

It seemed their hearts could endure no greater joy, but just before they reached camp they paused, and there under the first stars that twinkled out, he set love's holy seal upon her lips—"A kiss as long and silent as the ecstatic night, and deep, deep shuddering breaths—which meant beyond what ever could be told by word or kiss."

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They hoped to find that the rest had not returned, and attempted to saunter into camp as unconcernedly as possible.

But they were spied, and greeted by the first detachment of the attacking party.



"Bless me! Here they come at last, after causing their friends such agony of suspense all these hours."

Practiced eyes read the truth instantly. Indeed, they might as well have sought to veil the lightning, for the light that was flooding their spirits, cast its illumination over all.

Dorothea felt a transport of joy the moment she caught a view of their faces.

The secret was out, in spite of all the disguises they attempted. Deep abiding joy had taken possession of them, and the majesty of such pure love as theirs, penetrated the entire party.

Even the girls' voices were hushed after they retired to the tent.

"I declare! I feel just as if I had been at a wedding," Geraldine confided to Dorothea, as they were disrobing for the night. "Didn't it seem solemn and grand when they came in? And we had cut up so much about them and intended to make life a burden. It seemed just like a wedding march when they came."

"Yes, even *I* felt solemnly glad," Dorothea replied, "and they certainly laid some spell upon us, for we all acted awe-struck, and did not make them miserable a bit. But we will make up for it later."

Dorothea could hardly wait to give Eldah's hand a warm understanding pressure, but she had been waylaid by the chaperon, who was greatly rejoiced over this happy climax.

"O, Dick!" she exclaimed, the moment she was alone with her husband. "It has come at last! I



began to think it never would. It should have happened when we were here two years ago."

"There is where I differ with you, Cora. They needed the experience, and their love has been tried by fire. Their happiness to-night is much greater because of these years of waiting."

"Possibly, but I do not believe in people who belong together, wasting so much time apart," replied the impulsive Mrs. Cora.

Her husband was larger visioned. "They were not ready for this before. I believe these hard years have been a means of preparation and unfoldment, and that it is part of the perfect ordering of our ways, that the crowning blessing comes into our lives at exactly the right moment. I also feel that many who are in such feverish haste to hurry events of this nature, make the most fatal mistakes of life."

"Well, what is the sense of waiting half a lifetime?" responded his amiable but impetuous little wife.

"Because, my dear, some lives need just that discipline, and a Higher Wisdom defers the greatest gift until they have mastered their lessons."

"You are a philosopher, Dick, and doubtless take a more sane view than I; but all the same, my opinion is unchanged."

And having enjoyed a woman's prerogative of having the last word, she subsided for the night.



"I put my heart to school  
In the world where men grow wise.  
'Go out,' I said, and learn the rule.  
Come back when you win a prize.'  
My heart came back again—  
'Now *where* is the prize?' I cried.  
'The rule was false, and the prize was Pain,  
And the teacher's name was Pride.'

"I put my heart to school  
In the woods where the verriès sing,  
In the fields where the wild flowers spring,  
And the blue of heaven bends near.  
'Go out,' I said, 'you are half a fool,  
And perhaps they can teach you here.'  
'And why do you stay so long, my heart,  
And wherefore do you roam?'  
The answer came with a laugh and song:  
'I find this school is Home.' "



## CHAPTER LI.

The concluding days of camp life were spent in one round of merry making.

The spell, and awe-struck feeling, which Dorothea declared the happy pair had laid upon the crowd, soon disappeared, and they were constantly subjected to numerous assaults. Even Dorothea, who had been so firm a champion, now capitulated, and in spite of all her grave offices of kindness, led on the attacking party whenever they needed her valuable assistance.

"Never had so much fun before in my life!" exclaimed Dorothy, as she cast a mischievous glance toward the Professor and Myrtelius.

"Two engaged couples on my hands to concoct schemes against, has filled my cup of happiness to the brim. I'll need a dishpan to catch the overflow pretty soon."

"If you can enjoy the happiness of others so much, what would it be if you were in their place?" asked a young gentleman who was growing rather sentimental toward the blooming western girl.

"O, spare me!" covering her face with her hands. "The thought is positively insupportable. Besides, I must not delude you into the belief that I am enjoying their happiness! Why, sir, I am in the height of bliss when making them uncomfortable."



"That's right!" Dolly couldn't exist if she did not have fun at some one's expense."

"Isn't that rather heartless?" queried the afore-said gentleman, who was rather afraid of Miss Dorothy's darts.

"Oh, I haven't such an article in my possession, so you cannot expect me to have compassion on two such interesting couples as they are."

"Well, is the difficulty one that cannot be remedied?" he whispered, as he gave her an adoring look.

"No, sir, it is hopeless, for I am convinced that should I possess such an organ, it is made of adamant and impregnable to all the fiery darts of the wicked."

"I'll tell you," said the host, coming up in time to hear the last remark, "when Miss Dorothy hauls down her flag of unconditional surrender—as I prophesy she will some day—we will celebrate."

"With fireworks!" laughingly asked Dorothea.

"I should say so," he responded, "for when *you* capitulate, it will be an event to be chronicled in history."

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed the merry party, "*we will* have our revenge!"

Camp was being broken, the tents were rolled up on the ground, hampers of provisions, suit cases and wraps, were piled promiscuously together awaiting the coming of the carryall.

Suddenly the clouds darkened the clear blue overhead, and almost in a moment, rain began to descend



and the wind to blow with such fury that a hurricane seemed imminent.

The party rushed for shelter to the cottage, which was crowded to its utmost capacity.

An hour passed, and the storm, instead of diminishing, increased in momentum, nevertheless, while the forces of Nature raged without, mirth reigned supreme within.

Noon came and no abatement of the storm, so there was nothing to be done but unpack their few remaining articles of food, and make their meal from left overs, but they afterward declared their rainy picnic dinner was the best of all.

About two p. m. the rain ceased falling, and they started on their homeward journey. But they had gone but a few miles when the storm came on with such renewed force, that they were obliged to seek the shelter of the woods. Although, after a tree was struck by lightning, and another broken by the wind, they decided to hasten onward to the nearest village.

They had left their team on the other side of a small stream, which they crossed upon the logs that spanned it. But as they approached to return, what was their dismay to find that one of the logs had disappeared, while the water was rising so rapidly that the other was in danger any moment of going.

"We must cross quickly or we are here for the night," the host said, as he prepared to carry his wife over the slippery log. "Hurry up, boys, or you are doomed."



The ladies were all assisted, with the exception of Dorothea and Geraldine, who spurned all offers of gallantry, and holding each others' hands, walked over with rather a lofty scorn of their more timid sisters.

Scarcely had the last one crossed, before the log moved slowly down the stream.

"Matters did assume rather a dubious look," even Dorothea confessed, as she saw it disappear.

They were soon on their way, but the horses were not well shod, and found it difficult to keep their footing; indeed, one of the four had fallen in going down hill, and the driver felt too much anxiety to enjoy the spirit of merriment that still pervaded the crowd.

Although the party were thoroughly drenched, not a moment did their lively voices cease, and when they drove into the village, never had the peaceful natives witnessed such an invasion.

A small house, hardly as large as their summer cottage, bore the distinguished name, "Hotel."

Here, at rare intervals, travelers on their way to the mountains, tarried for the night. But to have their tranquility disturbed by such a lively party, was certainly an event in that quiet Rip Van Winkle community.

A college crowd at any time is rather paralyzing to the uninitiated, but when dropped down in such a plight, it is even more formidable.

The landlord belonged to that type of individuals whose cast iron features were never known to relax, but even he succumbed under the genial



atmosphere these gay young people carried with them.

"Haven't but one hairpin left in my head!" exclaimed Dorothy, letting her gold bronze hair down her back. "And my mountaineer hat, so dear to my maiden's heart, ('You admit to the possession of a heart, after all?' interrupted the gentleman who was ever at her side. 'No, I don't!' she paused to answer), has disappeared down the stream of Time, that we had so much fun in crossing. But *that* is but a meager portion of my woes. The colors in my dress have all run. I am, in plain English, a total wreck, and have met with such irretrievable reverses of fortune, that I doubt if my own parents would recognize their offspring."

"Supper!" roared out the landlord, whose vocal powers were evidently running opposition to the thunder which crashed unpleasantly near.

The repast was but a frugal one, but they were ready to do justice to anything set before them, without questioning its quality.

The resources of the hotel being inadequate to the needs of the party for the night, they decided to resume their journey.

"We certainly cannot get any more cold than we have," said the chaperon, "so we better get home and into dry clothing as quickly as possible."

It was the general verdict, so they went on, and, after leaving the foothills, made rapid progress, arriving at home just at midnight's holy hour, arousing the slumbering inhabitants by their tooting horns and college songs.



Again camp life for another season was over, and they all felt, in spite of their adventurous trip homeward, that it had been the best of all their good times, for had there not been a thrilling love story brought to its climax!

They rejoiced over it, in spite of their efforts to make the happy pair uncomfortable.

To Mr. Kingsley and Eldahrema, the time will ever be regarded as the beginning of Paradise, and no spot on earth will seem so sacred as their woodland summer home.

Nature had indeed taught them many lessons, but they had now caught her innermost secret. Bending their ear close, they had heard her whisper: "Love, love, my children," and *they loved!*



“The story of humanity is a story of heavenly purposes and powers continually obscured and thwarted by earthly passions and shames. . . . And even the Christ has not drawn aside the veil upon the face of life. . . . So it comes to this: Whether we look for God in the wondrous earth, or in the more wondrous human story, or in the sacred Book, or in one who gathers up the deepest meanings of all these into himself, day by day longings arise in our hearts to know as we do not know and to see as we cannot see.”



## CHAPTER LII.

The able and efficient lawyer in whose hands Professor Van Drummel's case had been placed, lost no time in pushing it to the finish, and upon Mr. Kingsley's return, he was summoned to appear in court the following day.

In a hasty glance about the court room, he did not at first discover Hattie, but when their eyes met at length, she shrank from his gaze.

The proof was so strong, the testimony so clear, and, by a strange and happy Providence, the jury non-purchasable, that in spite of Professor Van Drummel's lawyer, the case was evidently going against him.

But the attorney relied much upon his client's magnetic power, and gentlemanly bearing, in influencing the jury, and turning the tide in his favor. So when he was given an opportunity to refute the charges, or bring any proof he might to clear himself, he arose with a smile most winsome, and faced the audience with assurance.

"What a shame! Such a fine man!" exclaimed many of his admiring friends, who crowded the gallery.

Loud applause greeted him, until the Judge commanded silence.

Professor Van Drummel bowed and smiled at



his friends. He was a shade paler, but otherwise was perfectly at his ease, and so self-possessed that each moment as he proceeded with his defense he was winning more to his side.

Kingsley, Trueman, and their lawyer, betrayed anxiety in every feature.

"He certainly possesses that dreadful satanic power to 'smile and smile and be a villain still,'" whispered Kingsley to Trueman.

Then something unusual happened.

Poor Hattie had sat there entranced under the spell she always felt in his presence. Now she arose, and ere anyone was aware, appeared at his side.

The Professor had not noticed her among the sea of faces turned up to his, and he paused aghast.

Hattie did not utter a sound; indeed, she had never been so controlled as at this moment.

She stood there silently looking up into his face with the most touching expression of hopeless love and sorrow that could be depicted upon human countenance.

Then she turned to the Judge: "May I speak?" she asked, in such a subdued and pleading voice that the Judge could not refuse. Besides, he felt that this was the turning point of the case.

"Granted!" he said, in almost a tone of tenderness, for the girl's pathetic expression had softened all hearts.

"Listen!" she spoke in a quiet tone that was far more effective than any tragic outburst would



have been. "*As there is a God in Heaven, this man is false to the core of his heart!*"

"Every word said to-day of him is true. For my own sake, whose rose of innocence he has stolen, I would be silent; but my little sister's cries come to my ears in a way that drives me to the verge of despair."

"This man and his friend decoyed her away, although her soul was as pure and true as any little child's in your beautiful homes. It is for her sake, I say: *Give him the full penalty of the law!*"

She addressed this to the jury, every word of which rang conviction through their souls.

The girl cast one glance at the Professor, and then, overtaken by her old infatuation, turned once more to the audience: "I detest him for the wreck he has made me! I feel utter hatred for the one who has ruined my Marion! But oh, alas, alas, this is woman's heritage, *I love him still!*"

Her last words rang out with a thrill that stirred every heart, so full were they of passionate love and hopeless despair.

She quitted the stand amid profound silence, more sane than she had ever been since the great wrong had touched her life.

When the Professor sufficiently recovered, he determined to win back the popular favor he had recently enjoyed; but the Judge forbade him a word, and the jury returned after a brief retirement with the verdict—"Guilty!"

The hush was deathlike. It was indeed a con-



signment to the tomb of oblivion one whose sway over people had been marvelous.

The star of his manhood, which gave such promise of fame, had set forever.

This man of great talents had ruthlessly squandered his substance, and when he had reached the very pinnacle of success, found swift retribution upon his track.

But a few weeks ago, a most welcome guest in the best homes. Today, ostracized!

Mr. Kingsley was determined to reach Hattie, but she evaded him and disappeared in the crowd.

"We must surely trace Marion now," he said to Trueman.

Their attorney gave them this bit of information. Hattie had sought an interview with him and sent the following message to Eldah from Marion: "Tell her it is of no use to seek me now. *She is an angel in Heaven, and I have taken my first step towards hell, and we are forever separated!*"

The two gentlemen were filled with deep sorrow.

"Poor little girl! I am sure she was brave to the last, and that she made every effort to reach her friends."

Mr. Kingsley was overcome.

"One only out of thousands, my friend," replied the lawyer. "Many a girl, pure as a snow drop, is trapped, and makes heroic efforts to escape the hounds of hell."

Trueman's fine sensibilities were shocked.

"Let us go home, Kingsley. I've had all I can



stand of this tainted atmosphere. Good God!" he exclaimed reverently, "how long!"

Mr. Kingsley could think of nothing else but Marion and her message. "I cannot tell my Eldah that," he said, as they stood waiting for a car. "She adored that child. It would nearly break her heart."

"No, I should not tell her," Mr. Trueman replied, just as a well dressed man came down the street, half supporting a very young girl who could hardly have walked unaided.

Mr. Kingsley caught a glimpse of her face for one instant only. The couple had passed them and the man was hurrying her along.

Kingsley rushed after them, Trueman following. As he caught them on the crossing he called: "Marion! Marion! O little Marion! Is it you?" The man with her turned livid in hue. A dull look of recognition came for a moment into the girl's face; then she lost it, and answered thickly, as though she were heavily drugged: "Take me home, Jim. My head aches so."

This scene was being enacted on the crossing of one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city. Traffic teams were in danger of crushing them. The policeman hurried part of the crowd on and forbade the rest crossing. Thus Marion was again separated from her deliverers, for by the time they could cross, the man had put her into a cab and told the driver to whip up his horses. But Mr. Kingsley had never lost sight of them for an instant, and they sprang into another cab that hap-



pily stood at the curbing, and succeeded in following them for some blocks, now and then losing sight of them, but never entirely, and after reaching the more quiet streets, driving slowly and as if unconscious of them.

The man with Marion, evidently was thrown off his guard, when their cab passed and did not offer to molest them.

From the rear window of the cab, Kingsley and Trueman, saw them stop before a beautiful flat building, and watched him carry the half insensible girl up the steps and disappear.

While feeling an intense desire to rush in and demand the poor child, they still sought to curb it and proceed sanely.

They drove slowly back and took the number, stopped long enough to telephone that they would not be home for the dinner hour, then found a trustworthy officer. This consumed an hour of precious time, but they felt positive they would return with the child.

Mr. Kingsley was white with suspense as they searched the house; the officer demanding to see every inch of room from garret to cellar, and stationing Trueman and Kingsley at different points to guard every avenue of escape. Still no Marion! The landlady showing them the suite of rooms they had occupied for two months, and stating upon her oath, that *just half an hour previous*, the man had paid her, and taken the girl and gone, bag and baggage.



So another pure young life had been sacrificed upon the altar of man's baser nature.

Too awful to contemplate, but unless an awakening comes to secure better protection for girlhood, it may be any of the fairest flowers of the home.

*Your* boy, with his fair brow that bears the mark of truth and high endeavor; *your* girl, with her winsome sweetness, may be the victims.

Several years ago a home for disabled seamen was in flames. The fire escape did not reach to the top and the ladders were too short. The case was hopeless. Pitiful in the extreme was it to witness the men gathered at the windows, begging for rescue.

Suddenly a young man dashed through the crowd, grasped a ladder, and made his way with it to the top of the fire escape. Then, raising it over his head until it reached the window where the men were assembled, with the strength of a giant, he braced it, and stood there while men and boys made their way down the ladder over his body, and by an act which made all England ring with his praise, *saved every one!*

Say not that heroism is dead.

The best manhood the world over, is capable of just such heroic deeds.

But not a few seamen stretch pleading hands to you, but the thousands and thousands of the fairest buds of womanhood. Innocent prattling childhood, in its stainless purity, appeal to all that is noblest in your breast.



Must *twenty thousand* young girls be sacrificed yearly in every large city, and the clean, pure, thinking manhood of our nation raise no protest?

Will not this true story of Hattie's, and little Marion's, reverberate through every reader's being, until each resolve to do all in his or her power to shield and protect the future fathers and mothers of our nation from this terrible blight?

"It is time to be brave, it is time to be true;  
It is time to be finding the thing you can do.  
It is time to put by the dream and the sigh,  
And work for the cause that is holy and high."



### CHAPTER LIII.

Dorothea was standing near her window enjoying a rare treat.

Her heavy studies and editorial duties left little time for general reading, but having a few moments before going out to the oratorical contest, in which she was to participate, she picked up a book and was soon lost in its perusal.

"The universe, I say, is made up of Law; the great Soul of the world is just and not unjust.

"Look thou, if thou have eyes or soul left, into this great shoreless Incomprehensible, into the heart of its tumultuous appearances, embroilments, and mad Time vertexes. Is there not silent, eternal, an all just, an all beautiful, sole Reality and ultimate controlling power of the whole?"

Dorothea read this aloud and paused to consider.

"Yes, Carlyle, there certainly is a 'Reality and ultimate controlling power of the whole.' "

"I wonder if I must stumble blindfolded as he did before I grasp the truth?"

Faith comes naturally to some natures,—mother's, for example; but I must always weigh and consider, must go back to the beginning of things, and that often puts me in a maze.

I am glad that I am a reasoning being, though, for I enjoy probing into first causes."



The bell rang, and Geraldine and some of the girls came in.

"Ready to go, Dixie? Thought we would have time to chat a little while."

Dorothea closed her book and descended at once to the level of the everyday.

Later, when Dorothea Maddox took her place upon the platform, some of her very best friends felt uneasy, for although she had a decided talent for oratory, it was practically undeveloped, and she was to compete with those whose training had been of the best.

"Why didn't she choose a funny selection?" whispered several; "she certainly would do better at something on that order."

But Dorothea had been somewhat grieved in spirit, because the set in which she moved had always relegated her to the light and trifling.

"I will show them I am capable of something deeper than surface," she said, determinedly, as she caught their disappointed glances when she began her subject.

It was not an oration such as students are wont to astonish their admiring friends with, not the burning eloquence of Henry Clay or Webster.

She had eschewed these, likewise shunned the poets, and decided to give something that had throbbed within her own brain and fairly panted for expression.

"They will never believe it is mine," she thought, while writing it, "but it is time that I showed the



public I am capable of doing something more than make fun for them.”

Everybody was eager to hear what the sprightly girl had to offer them. ,

“I have chosen for my subject the most incomprehensible, inexplicable, non-explainable one that can be considered.

“One word compasses it, but you will admit that a multiplicity of words cannot explain this unfathomable and greatest of all human mysteries.

“The brightest intellects from the earliest dawn of Time, and down the æons, have given up the problem.

“And as we stand in the glorious light of the twentieth century, with all the intellectual vigor of an enlightened and progressive people, we find the same inability to grasp the true status of the subject, and are still confronted by the same perplexity and bewilderment, when that unsolved and unsolvable enigma is presented to the world—*Woman!*”

She was greeted by a storm of applause. Her friends were reassured, she would be her entertaining self after all.

But after securing this good hold upon her audience, she led them up to the highest, holiest view of womanhood, and from that high altitude she widened their outlook, deepened their respect, and caused even the most shallow among her listeners, to feel the dignity, the graciousness, and the power that is the heritage of every true woman.

A high ideal was held up, but made so human



as to put its possible attainment within the reach of every aspiring soul.

She sat down, having left an impress which was destined to be lasting upon the mind of many a young woman present.

Several fine speakers followed, and Dorothea, having given out her best, now felt certain of failure, as one after another charmed the audience.

The prize was the annual one of fifty dollars in gold.

Dorothea had worked hard to go through school, and had come up to the close of her senior year entirely unaided.

She was a splendid specimen of what a country maiden can attain, who possesses sufficient push and perseverance.

The contest was an exceedingly close one, and the judges were compelled to announce a tie.

When the names of the fortunate contestants were read, Misses Geraldine Rowe, and Dorothea Maddox, were awarded first prize.

Geraldine gracefully stepped to the front of the platform, and with a pretty bow, accepted her portion of the prize. Then, ere Dorothea could do likewise, she turned to the audience: "To-night we have all been touched in the depths, by the original and masterly oration on womanhood. We have had glimpses of the possibilities which lie within our reach, and because this young woman has exemplified it in her own life, and proved what a determined girl may accomplish, it gives me the keenest pleasure to say that I most cordially relin-



quish my portion of the prize to one whom I feel has fairly and justly earned the entire sum."

Stepping to Dorothea's side, she laid the shining gold piece in her hand, while a storm of applause shook the building.

The audience continued to cheer wildly until Dorothea stepped forward, and with a gesture silenced them.

"While deeply appreciating the magnanimous action of my friend, it is impossible for me to accept so great an honor when the judges deemed it not wholly mine."

She bowed graciously, while the gentleman who had made the presentation stood perplexed.

"Here is an example," he at length aptly remarked, "of the truth of Miss Maddox's statement. What shall I do in this bewildering situation, with not only woman in the Abstract to deal with, but in the Concrete also? One of them is admitted to be inscrutable mystery, but what of two?" (Great applause.)

The judges had retired to discuss the matter and go once more over their estimates. They were men of honor, and would not change their markings to fit the case; but it must be confessed that it was with genuine pleasure that they discovered an omission of a fraction, which carried the prize rightfully to Dorothea Maddox.

"Ah, this is certainly a happy avenue of escape!" exclaimed the master of ceremonies, as the note was handed him.



"I take great pleasure in announcing that there was a slight error in the summary, and the prize rightfully belongs to Miss Dorothea Maddox," and he handed it to her amid tremendous applause.

Dorothea had vindicated herself and proven to the world that she was deeper than the wit and nonsense with which she entertained them.

She had really won, and was happy accordingly.



## CHAPTER LIV.

Commencement week, with its excitement, was nearly over. The seniors were enjoying a pleasant flutter of spirits, and now the last and most eventful day had arrived, bringing parents and admiring friends.

The large class of two hundred young men and women, formed a pleasing picture, as they marched around the auditorium. The girls were charming in their white dresses, while the gentlemen were fastidious enough to impress all favorably.

Myrtelius' long years of strenuous toil were about to be rewarded, and as proof of the high esteem in which she was held by pupils, as well as teachers, not one in the class but felt she had earned the position of valedictorian.

As she stepped forward to deliver her oration, all became conscious of a look of special exultation.

The scholarly production called forth a round of applause. At its conclusion, Professor Barney led her to the front of the platform. The Dean of the University stepped in front of them, and, ere the audience were aware, had caused them to join hands, and in a few words, the marriage ceremony was performed.

Then, amid the most astonished throng, the honored professor led down the aisle the happy bride, and they were driven away in a carriage before



the people had fairly recovered from the shock of so tremendous a surprise.

When they did, the students could be no longer restrained, and they gave cheer upon cheer for Professor Barney.

"I never heard of anything so startling in college life!" exclaimed Geraldine to Dorothy, as they rolled homeward in their carriage.

"Now, own up. You were surprised, too, were you not?"

"Well, it is certainly safe to assert that University circles never had a greater shock. Even when the diamond appeared, hardly anyone outside of our fraternity, suspected that the affair was one of such official importance."

"Well! well!" exclaimed several members of the faculty, "they certainly were adroit and played a clever trick upon us."

"Every wedding, says the proverb,  
Makes another, soon or late;  
Never yet was any marriage  
Entered in the book of fate,  
But the names were also written,  
Of the patient pair that wait."

As Mr. Kingsley escorted Eldah homeward, he brought a lovely rose color to her cheeks.

So, in the midst of Life's sorrows, it is much to know that there is a beautiful love abroad in the world, and that some are destined to drink from this divine cup, although others may be given myrrh instead of love's wine, yet "God will hold the balance true."



## CHAPTER LV.

A peep into the Alexander mansion shows it most brilliantly lighted, yet no party of any consequence is in evidence.

In the parlors the family are assembled, and for the first time in months, seem to be enjoying a social evening together.

Mrs. Alexander is her entertaining self, and seems unusually devoted to "Alexander the Great," for at one time she stopped at his side, and stroked his hair, her lily-like hands lingering lovingly amid the dark locks that now had a suggestion of silver.

Mr. Alexander looked happy, and put his arm about his wife, as she stood near him.

"This is the happiest birthday I have had in years, Marie," and he smiled at her admiringly.

"It has been the happiest time I have known, too, for a long while," she answered.

Some power almost supernatural seemed upon them to-night.

She was still toying with his hair. "Alex, I wish that we could have more good times like we have to-day."

He looked deeply into her eyes. "Do you, really, Marie?"

She smiled her answer.

"Then we will!" He gave her hand a warm clasp.



Lora, Ned, and Thad, were playing games near.

Even Ned seemed to catch the pleasant spirit abroad in the home, and came out of his apathy and selfishness occasionally.

The evening wore away, and after the rest had retired, Lora lingered for a last good-night talk with her father. She sat upon the arm of his chair and they talked more deeply than ever before.

"Lora, once you asked me if I knew about 'the One who walks the furnace fire with us. I have learned a little about Him since, and I believe it is all true. The conviction has grown within me slowly, but surely.

Perhaps it is due to my mother's prayers—or some other's; but anyway, I have felt a strange influence upon me for several years."

And then he told her of the refrain that had so strangely touched his heart, and whose spell lingered so long. Also of the gifted speaker whose words had so taken hold of him.

"Lora, I am still a man of the world, and not what church people would call religious; but I feel differently about these things, although I am not sure that I could mention this to anyone but you."

He bade her the usual tender good-night, and Lora went to her room comforted, for it had been so beautiful to see her father and mother spending the evening so happily together. Then her father's words made a deep impression upon her earnest young soul.

"O, I am so thankful papa knows it is true! Now



he will have help in his 'furnace fire,' and I shall learn about the 'fourth Form,' too."

Great tranquility of spirit was Lora's, as she sank to slumber, murmuring: "Oh, I am *so* glad papa knows it is true!"

Mr. Alexander had caught a new view of life upon this memorable birthday, and had decided to make it a red letter day for others.

Among other things, he had mailed a handsome check to Marshall Allen's mother; likewise purchased a scholarship in the University for Marshall. Indeed, he had been very busy and happy, doing many kindnesses to those about him, so at the close of the day he felt a quiet peace. "It has been a white day," he thought.

As he entered his room he heard again the words: "If *any* man will open the door, I will come in." He stood for a moment absorbed in thought; then, dropping into his comfortable chair, he said: "I feel that the door *is* opened. I was not conscious of the process, I do not know when it was done—but I seem open to all good influences."

He gazed thoughtfully at a picture Lora had given him today. It was a wonderful Figure clad in white, stilling the storm tossed sea.

Mr. Alexander seemed fascinated by it.

"Yes, He has certainly been calming my tempest tossed sea of late."

He leaned his head back upon the chair, and smiled, a rare, sweet smile. "Ah! I hear that sweet, sweet voice again, just as I heard it in the din of



city and whirl of business—*'He will keep me till the river rolls its water at my feet.'*”

He closed his eyes and slept the sweet sleep of childhood.

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Morning dawned. The earth was dressed in her fairest hues. The family arose late, with the exception of Lora, who had been out for an hour in the delicious freshness, and now answered the breakfast bell with sparkling eyes.

All were gathered about the table, including lazy Ned—except the head of the house.

“Ring Mr. Alexander’s bell,” Marie said to the servant.

They waited several moments. No answer.

“Papa is never late. I will see what is wrong,” and Lora sprang up from the table and flew to her father’s apartments.

There he sat with the same smile upon his face, apparently in sweet slumber; but the river of Death, had indeed “rolled its waters at his feet,” although the illumination of his countenance disarmed Death of its terrors.

“Papa! papa!” called Lora, never dreaming of the truth.

For the first time in her life, there was no response to her loving call.

She made every effort to arouse him, and when at last the terrible truth flashed over her, she fell senseless to the floor.



Search the world over, and it would be difficult to find a more sacred and tender bond of pure affection, than existed between this father and daughter; yet this most precious tie had to be severed, and the child learn to live on, when all that made life sweet had fled.

Why? why? *God knoweth.* Therefore "in the darkness of thy woe, be thou still."

This is a life reading, and that we may have courage to live in spite of those heart-breaking sorrows, and may find in the bitter dregs of the cup that our Father gives us, His sweet, all sufficient peace, is one of the messages of these pages.

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A few days later, at one of the most fashionable churches, a vast audience convened to do honor to one of the city's most leading men.

Perhaps few in the business world had won and held so many prominent people as their real friends, so the sorrow was widespread and deep.

Among the elegantly dressed throng that crowded the church, was a lady of refined and dignified bearing, clad in pure white, who sat near the family pew.

Evidently she was a stranger to all about her.

A student of human nature would have been much interested in watching the varying expressions that came and went in her sweet, pure face.

A look that was fairly luminous shone in her eyes. Deep peace was there, and, at times, a joy that seemed not of earth. Only when her eyes



wandered to Lora's bowed head, intense suffering replaced the look of exultation. She leaned forward at such moments as if she could hardly restrain herself from taking the suffering girl in her arms, and she seemed to gain self-mastery only when she looked away from Lora, and her eyes rested upon the casket.

As the friends passed by for a last look, she paused one second, and rested her dainty white glove near the head; a mere touch, one swift glance in which sorrow, peace, and joy mingled, and she passed down the aisle with a step that almost seemed like a bridal march.

She was driven to the cemetery, but remained at a distance during the ceremony; nor did she even go in sight of the grave until every person had gone. Then, with a springing step, she went straight to it. In her hands were bridal roses and maiden hair ferns. She bent tenderly down and laid them on the grave.

*"For all eternity, your own, beloved!"* she said, with a face that seemed transfigured with light.

*This* her reward, after a lifetime of patient waiting and sorrow?

*Only a grave* after all her self-denial, her purity, and high sense of honor?

She had held her soul high above wrong. Her life had been given out entirely for others, and now she had—only a grave!

But true love is deathless, many waters cannot quench or floods drown it. And over this grave the bow of promise shone clear. Above her head



a little bird suddenly began to warble its vesper hymn, "singing as if God had taught it." *"It is better farther on!"*

She moved toward her carriage, and glancing for a last look at the loved spot, she saw the little bird, her messenger of hope, sitting upon the grave, still singing.

"Sits upon the grave and sings it," she murmured softly.

"Sings it when the heart would groan,  
Sings it when the shadows darken—  
*It is better farther on."*



## CHAPTER LVI.

A year has passed since the close of the last sad chapter. Lora, her mother, and the boys, were again at their summer retreat.

Lora had insisted that she had rather go there than to any other place in the universe.

She had lost little time in renewing her walks by the cottage. A powerful attraction seemed to draw her to the spot, and at last one day she encountered its mistress.

The lady stopped when she saw the girl, and turned a shade paler, while tears arose in her eyes.

"Would you like to come in and rest awhile in my rustic retreat?" she asked, as she led the way to a secluded nook at the rear, where a summer house, embowered in roses, beckoned them invitingly.

"O, how beautiful!" exclaimed Lora. "I have always admired your house so, and longed to know you," raising her sweet eyes to the strong face above her.

"And I have longed to have *you* right here in this very spot with me!" responded Theodora.

"Oh, have you?" asked the girl, eagerly. "How did you know about me?"

"I have seen you pass often, and then Eldah Homesworth told me of you."



Lora looked the gratitude she felt into her friend's face, for she knew they were friends. Her soul told her so. She felt some way a rest come to her tired young heart for the first time since her sorrow.

All through the sad year, Theodora's heart had gone out in deepest sympathy to the lonely child. It was all she could do now to control herself and refrain from taking her—*his* child—in her arms.

"Not yet," she said. "I must wait a little for that, but it is a pre-destined friendship, hence divine."

The hour passed so quickly Lora could hardly realize its flight, and ere she departed she had promised to end her walks often at the cottage. Thus, little by little, the friendship grew, and each began to feel a new interest in life.

Theodora did not mention the sorrow, but indirectly, with tender, tactful touch, gave the child comfort, and every day Lora looked up more to the gracious woman.

Mrs. Alexander's hopes for her only daughter began to revive, for Lora had drooped ever since her father's going, but now, although still sad, an awakening seemed coming to her.

The shock had sobered the society leader, and she certainly missed her gallant husband; still the world had so long held first place in her affection, that she could not grieve as Lora did.

She spent much of her time spoiling her favorite child, whose manners were becoming so over-



bearing that he had few, if any, friends outside his fond, doting mother.

Under the care of Lora, and with Marshall's influence still strong upon him, Thad was climbing to better things.

Marshall had left the bank and passed a creditable year at the University.

He had felt most keenly the loss of his beloved employer, and had accepted Thad as a sacred trust.

He wrote to the small boy every week, and managed to see him very often.

One day, shortly before Lora's return to her city home, she had an unusually fine talk with her friend.

Lora had mentioned the young men who were at the hotel, and sometimes haunted her steps.

"They all tire me dreadfully, and I want to run away when any of them come near me. Mamma thinks that I am foolish. I have no doubt I am, but there isn't one in our set that I enjoy."

Theodora felt her opportunity to help the girl. "Lora, I hope you will never be tempted by position to marry one you do not love with all your soul," looking at her with a pained expression, as if she had spoken out of the depths of a deep experience.

"I hope that you will come in contact with the nobler side of manhood, and see the contrast. These weaker ones are so much beneath you in high standards of living."

A blush tinted Lora's face for a second. Her friend, gifted in the study of the human face, read the truth.



"The child has already met one she deems worthy, and looks up to," she thought.

She put her arms around the girl, so young, with life all untried before her, so lovable, and so very dear to her.

How tender she felt of the child who had just crossed over into Womanhood's undiscovered country. Her own experience had made her quick to shield others from these vital mistakes.

"Lora, remember this:

'That unless you can muse in a crowd all day,  
By the light of a face that fixed you;  
Unless you can love as the angels may,  
With the breadth of heaven 'twixt you.  
Unless you can feel that his faith is fast  
Through years of separation—  
Unless you can trust his love to the last,  
Oh, fear to call it loving.'"

Lora nestled in the kind arms that held her, she felt such a refuge in the heart of this understanding friend.

"I do not know how I shall do without you!" she said, looking lovingly up into the dear face.

"We will write, and you will come out often for a little visit; and remember, dear, I am always near you in thought, and whenever you are weary of the world, come to me."

Theodora gave vent to her long pent-up feeling for the child, and folded her closely to her heart. She seemed *his* legacy to her, this precious daughter he had so idolized.

Lora was surprised at the intensity of feeling



her friend betrayed, for she was usually so poised and reserved.

"How did it happen that *you* love me?" questioned Lora.

"Sometime you will know; I cannot tell you now," she answered, with the loveliest smile Lora had ever seen, upon her face.

So the Comforter spake peace to these sorrowing ones, and in divine compassion, implanted within their hearts a friendship, that was destined to be sacred as a sacrament all through their earthly pilgrimage.



## CHAPTER LVII.

Dorothea spent a busy and profitable year after finishing the University. She had been very successful in magazine articles, and her journalistic ability duly recognized.

Now the event of her life was about to occur. She was to be sent for a trip through the Rockies and the Selkirks, as the correspondent of one of the leading dailies.

She stood upon the doorstep of the old home the morning before her departure, looking over the dear old landmarks of her childhood musingly.

Except for her trip to the eastern city where she received her education, this wild rose had seen nothing of the world.

She thought how she had herded the cows a few years since, and of the wild rollicking girl who could ride bareback the most unmanageable horse, of her care free happy days with her good mother and sturdy father.

"And is it possible that the country maiden who never expected to see anything of the world, or go anywhere, is to witness the grandeur of the mountains?"

"I feel this trip is going to change my entire life. My going away enlarged my horizon, and gave me a mental range I could never have attained



here. Now, what an opportunity this will afford for development! Life is a succession of steps, one thing leads to, and prepares us for the next. I could not have appreciated this trip a few years ago as now. I want my soul swept clean of cobwebs, that I may receive all that is for me, and when I come back to thee, dear childhood home, may it be with the pure, trusting heart of a girl, yet the fully developed powers of a woman, clear brain and well poised character. I desire to have done with this fitful, irresolute being that sometimes controls me, and really climb in purpose, as well as in actuality—‘God’s heights of power,’ as Eldah calls them. So when I descend, it shall be to live out the high born thoughts gained from a wider outlook.”

Dorothea joined a personally conducted excursion, but was a stranger to them for a brief time only, for her original remarks soon attracted attention. As usual, her merry nature was uppermost, for it always seemed impossible for her to give utterance to her nobler thoughts, so but for snatches from her journal, we would get little of the real girl.

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“Just hemmed in by mountains on every side! The most fantastic shapes! I should think that God would run out of patterns.”

“‘Infinity! infinity!’ runs through me with an awe-inspiring thrill. God is the Mighty Architect, ‘His hands formed the dry land.’”



Then with childlike simplicity, "O I am proud of you, God! I never felt such pride before, my *remarkable God!*"

This from Dorothea. Truly we but "see through a glass darkly," when we sit in judgment upon one another.

The party had stopped at a charming villa upon the mountain side for several days of sightseeing.

Dorothea had wandered away from the rest to commune with solitude. She felt the freedom of isolation and voiced her inner thoughts.

"My prayer is that the strength of the mountains, also their steadfastness, may enter in and become a part of my being."

The superintendent of the party, with another gentleman, came up just in time to catch the last remark.

Surprised at the sudden intrusion upon her quiet, her exalted look vanished with lightning rapidity, and she turned about and faced them, with such a mirthful expression—as she held up some mountain flowers she had just gathered—that the intruders could hardly realize their ears had not played them a trick, in overhearing such lofty aspirations from the lively looking young lady who now confronted them.

Still, the second gentleman was positive of his correct hearing, and he gazed at the young lady with interest.

People of real worth soon tire of an unceasing round of wit, however fascinating it may be for a time; but when they discover a depth of char-







acter back of the sparkle, it becomes a most interesting study. So it seemed to the gentlemen as they escorted the young lady back to the hotel.

"Allow me to warn you not to stray too far alone, Miss Maddox," said their superintendent, "I fear for one of your daring nature, and there is real danger of becoming lost in some of these rocky defiles."

"Thank you, but I have taken excellent care of myself, lo these many years! Mr. Towner, and never lost myself yet!" she exclaimed, with spirit.

After she had passed into the hotel, the two friends exchanged glances.

"Did you hear what she was saying when we came upon her, Rochester?"

"Yes," the gentleman replied, "and I felt like a villain to intrude upon her solitude and hear what did not belong to us. It was a shame!"

"Perhaps, but I am not sorry, for it gave me the keynote to the girl. I never suspected her capable of such sentiments."

"I did," thought Roderick Rochester, as he strolled on alone, and seated himself upon a rock facing some grand old firs.

At his right was the most perfect evergreen mountain that can be imagined. Not a break of a foot in its symmetry and grace.

"This wonderful wall of granite at my back, that overhanging cliff, the waterfall, all proclaim the marvelous skill of the Creator. It seems to me an infidel must worship in such a profusion of wonders. The young lady is right, and I, too, want



the grandeur of these sights to permeate my being until I keep it forever in the heart of my soul."

Dorothea was surrounded by a lively group when Roderick Rochester returned to the hotel. He heard them laugh at some of her bright sallies. "But I read her better than any of them," he thought, with secret satisfaction.

This party of people had proved to be a most choice one. Teachers, physicians, lawyers, writers, were among them, and many were the contests of wit, and delightful conversations held on all sides.

All travellers have experienced the same: "Such splendid and unusual people as we met upon our trip!" and the wonder arises as to whether our travelling companions are really so superior to our comrades in the daily routine? Is it not that in escaping from the commonplace, our better selves are in the ascendancy, and we are more receptive and appreciative than when hurried and worried by the daily fret of life? Methinks, just as fine characters walk the daily path with us, but we are too dulled by the pressure of care to fully value them; then we are too reserved to show our highest self to those dearest, so the soul hides away, and often gives strangers, glimpses it would not show to its closest associates.

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Dorothea was charmed by the dashing, dancing, tempestuous stream, as it whirled and rushed madly on over the rocks. Winding in and out, disappearing, only to reappear when you were certain you



had lost it. It was the kinship of soul between herself and the stream, that made her love it so. She was like it in her ever varying moods. It spake to her thus: "Take into your life my animation, my purity, my depth, and give out to others the joy and sparkle of my life."

Mr. Rochester was the editor of one of the largest of eastern magazines. He was busy with his pencil as they sped along the shining track. "Here are grand old monarchs of the forest. Many of them have looked upon several centuries, while men appeared and disappeared in the arena of life, they gazed down with majestic pride. Just here they have been marred by forest fires, and stand gaunt and black against the blue of heaven, the only blight upon the fair landscape. It is sad to see these wonders of former ages thus destroyed; still, I get a glimpse of the distant mountains which I could not obtain otherwise. I wonder if humanity must sometimes be nearly consumed by the fires of adversity, that some other portion of it may obtain a higher view that was obstructed from them? I do not want to be burned out, rather let me fall in all glory and strength of manhood, like that grand oak yonder, than live to be inert like these dead firs."

"The mountains are becoming more magnificent, I am satisfied—" an eloquent look came upon his face as he gazed at the overhanging cliff—"with the grandeur of the Creator."

"If one feels incapable of worship, let him go among the Selkirks; and if they do not teach him



to bow the knee before their sublime and awful greatness, if they do not compel his obeisance, it is my opinion there is some mental defect."

"We are passing quiet beautiful Lake Griffin, Here the railroad is forced into the mountain side, because of the lake-filled valley."

"The reflections are perfect, in this emerald mirror set between imposing mountains. Wonderful rock walls rise almost perpendicularly on one side. 'The mountains are God's thoughts piled up,' some writer has said. What stupendous thoughts, then, are these!"

"And now we reach the Illecillewaet River, a boiling, seething stream, and it is interesting to see the mountains and the river contesting the right of way. On either side immense cliffs and wonderful cuts in the mountains, our furious stream plunging madly this way and that, out of sight a moment, then dashing into view again, as if determined to conquer."

"The message of the stream is potent for human life. 'To him who *will* conquer, he *may*!' "

"Going through the sublimity of the Selkirk range, I feel that a Divine Hand is showing me all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them."

"Noble firs fill the valley, and the river goes to a depth of three hundred feet below the railway. Now it is furious and roars like a grand cataract."

"Sir Donald lifts his hoary head. Language faints before his glory, and that of the marvelous canyon we are passing through."



Dorothea had no merry jests during this portion of her trip. She could not even write. "I did not want a word spoken," she said afterwards, "I just looked, and looked, and looked again, until my soul seemed literally to part company with my bodily tabernacle. I was stilled away down in the depths of my unsatisfied nature. It seemed that every crevice and pore of my being was penetrated by the Almightiness of the Author of these sublimities. Even a savage must have felt their stupendous vastness and bowed in reverence."

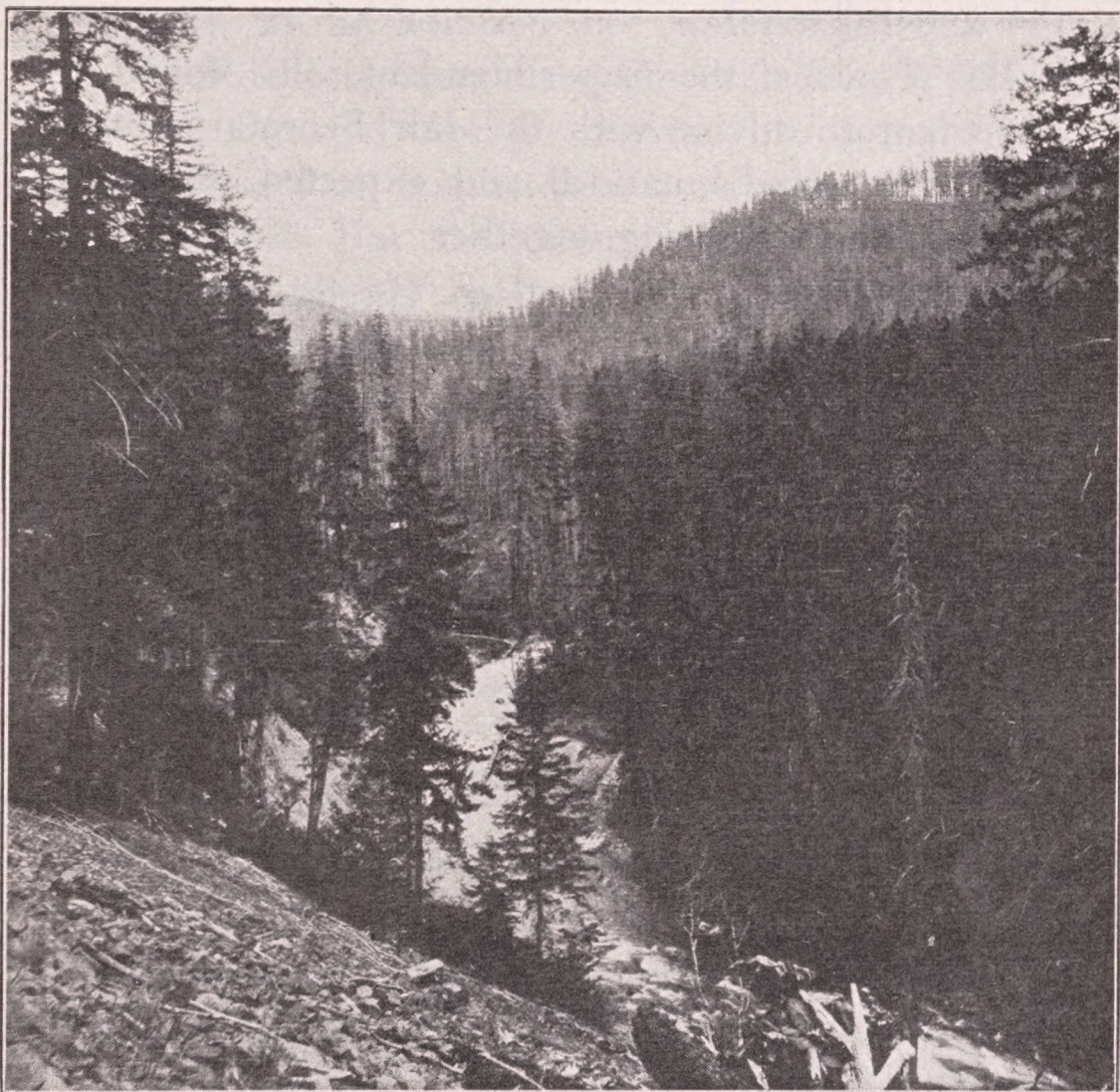
How parallel were the thoughts of these two. Will they learn the kinship, or will their lives but barely touch and then be whirled apart to meet no more upon this plane of life?

To travel together three months among the grandest scenery upon the continent, is often to become better acquainted with one another's real ego, than in years of quiet living on at home. In such close quarters, one becomes quite aware of the foibles and peculiarities of his neighbors, even though each is usually at his best.

While the party halted at one of the most fascinating places of beauty on their route, it was decided to form a "Good Fellowship Club." Mr. Roderick Rochester was chosen President, and Dorothea Madeline Maddox, Secretary. Mr. Rochester's cultured bearing had easily won the place. As for Dorothea, who was more ready with pencil than she?

Mr. Rochester, or R. R., as his friends called him, found the duties of his position far from







irksome. It is true, they required some hours of consultation with the Secretary, that he would have otherwise spent upon magazine work; but he seemed singularly willing to sacrifice his leisure for the general good.

Mr. Towner, the Superintendent, also found it important to advise with the fair Secretary, until it became quite a natural and expected thing, to see the three planning together.

Dorothea thought little of it. Having been associated with gentlemen in school life, she accepted these attentions as devoid of sentiment, and simply enjoyed the mental stimulus of sharpening her wits against these two bright intellects.

One afternoon Mr. Towner and she were so busy with their schemes for the general good, they did not perceive that the rest of the crowd had disappeared.

"If for no other reason, I am glad of the Club, for it gives me an opportunity to converse with you, Miss Maddox."

Dorothea had been lost for a moment in the beauty about her, and the remark recalled her with startling force.

"O dear! Is he going to turn sentimental and spoil our good times," she thought.

"I must return to the hotel. I have some work unfinished," she said, as she arose, ignoring his last remark.

The gentleman was too well bred not to feel his compliment was unwelcome, so he discreetly



changed the subject as he followed her down the path.

“What a dignified woman she is! Pretty nothings that so many girls like, do not go with her,” he thought, as he admired her stately figure.

Mr. Rochester saw them approach from a retreat of his, but did not go forward to greet them. Instead he took out his MS. and began to be very industrious. But the thoughts that usually came with such fluency to his pen, strangely retreated, and presently he dropped his work and was lost in meditation.

In this study of life tints, “I resolve one by one,  
when I pick from the mass

The persons I want, as before you they pass—  
To label them broadly in plain black and white

On the backs of them. Therefore, while yet he’s  
in sight,  
I will label my hero.”

Left an orphan at an early age, his guardian placed him in a home school for boys, from which he escaped, because its severe restrictions chafed his independent spirit. Embarking as a sailor boy, he made several voyages to different parts of the world, and—

“From many strange mouths heard many strange  
tongues,

Strained with many strange idioms his lips and  
his lungs,

Walked in many a far land, regretting his own;

In many a language groaned many a groan,”—



till at last, feeling a burning desire for knowledge, not obtainable in travel, he returned to America, sought out his guardian, and by his winning ways regained his favor.

His brilliant mind led his friend to insist upon a law course, but after going through Harvard, and gaining admission to the bar, he found court life so repellent, that, much to the displeasure of his friends, he quitted the profession, and emigrated to the broad, free West, soon finding himself at the head of a large newspaper establishment. His success was marked from the first. He won favor everywhere because of his pleasing personality and natural brightness.

Two years ago he had been offered the editorship of one of the most popular eastern magazines.

His changing life had given him diverse experiences, and his many sided nature been developed. So now, at thirty-two, his powers were beyond the ordinary.

His friend, Mr. Towner, had given an enthusiastic account of R. R.'s success.

"He is a capital fellow, the most companionable I ever knew, a rare story teller, and never one from him that would bring a blush to the purest woman in the land. He has had all kinds of thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes, and to hear him tell them in his inimitable fashion, is fascinating. He is an expert horseman, and his articles upon bronchos would upset the gravity of the most solemnly inclined. Yet he can go from the ridiculous to the sublime in a second, and he is



never preachy, but every one knows his life rings true and that he is non-purchasable."

He is certainly fascinating," replied a young lady listener, who had often sought to entrap their gifted President in her snares. This girl was not the only one who cast envious glances at Dorothea. "I don't care!" exclaimed one, revealing by her tones the opposite, "It isn't fair that Miss Maddox monopolize both of the leading lights."

"Allow me to differ from you," said a fine looking lady. "I am sure Miss Maddox has no thought of monopoly in this case. She attracts by her spontaneity, and there is nothing premeditated about it."

"Well, I should think that one such attendant would be enough to gratify anyone," added another maiden of the green-eyed persuasion.

"She is too sincere to trifle with a man for the fun of it," returned the lady, warmly, for Dorothea was becoming a favorite of hers.

"Don't you think Miss Maddox is flirting?"

"Assuredly not," the lady replied, "but I am certain, when she really falls in love, she will give the fortunate man a merry chase, ere she surrenders."

The dinner hour closed the conversation.



## CHAPTER LVII.

The closing remarks of the last chapter were overheard by Mr. Rochester, for, unconscious of his presence, the speakers had strolled on until they stopped for the final words of the conversation just on the other side of his retreat.

The thick bushes near them stirred slightly, and he escaped unobserved.

When he had walked some distance he stopped to think it over. "So she will give a fellow a merry chase! Fair lady, I believe you read her correctly." He pulled out his watch. "It is now four p. m., August 2d. I place it upon record, that if the indomitable castle is to be taken, from this hour I lay siege to it, and if it requires a lifetime, I shall conquer!"

"But I imagine it will have to be surprised; therefore, I will guard against any outward betrayal of more than ordinary interest; in fact, I have rather avoided than sought her during the whole journey."

The breeze played caressingly with his dark locks. "She is worth the homage of a lifetime. The die is cast!" And having formed this resolve, he marched back to the hotel with determination reflected in his whole being.

The first person he encountered was the young



lady herself, but he barely glanced at her as he passed.

If the truth must be told, Dorothea missed the pleasant greeting he usually accorded her. The things just out of her reach always held a peculiar charm to one of her contrary nature. So she went into dinner, somewhat vexed in spirit, although she had no conception why.

Everything passed off gaily. She had a ready answer to every question. All were gracious to her, but Mr. Rochester did not appear all evening. "What if he don't! I am sure it's immaterial to me!" she said, as she stood by one of the windows, looking at the snowy peaks touched with moonlight.

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For a full week as they journeyed onward, she saw little of "R. R." She was busy writing, and absorbing the glory.

At their next stop of a few days, she longed to escape the maddening crowd, and stole away for a little climb up the mountain. She carefully noted every curve in the path, and felt sure she could retrace her steps. She drank in deep breaths of the pure ether, and so enjoyed the freedom.

"On this height where the purple morning breaketh!" she soliloquized.

But what was it! A terrible crashing sound above her, as if the whole summit of the mountain was coming down upon her. She sprang to one side, just as a huge boulder came tearing madly



past her and plunged with frightful velocity down, down into the deep gorge below!

All the color fled from her face, as she realized the terrible danger from which she had escaped.

"That meant instant death to everything in its path!" she said, shudderingly, for trees and shrubs had been splintered into nothingness, as it sped by with awful force.

She knew not how long a time had elapsed, before she was startled by the rustle of the bushes, and heard a step.

She was not susceptible to fear, but the experience through which she had just passed, somewhat unnerved her, though she arose and looked formidable enough to repel the most daring intruder, wondering what fate held in store for her next.

"O thank heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Rochester, as he caught a glimpse of her. He was pale with excitement. "You were right in the path of the boulder. It is nothing short of a miracle that you escaped!"

He sank down exhaustedly, as if from prolonged search. "We have been looking everywhere for you," he explained, as soon as he recovered his breath.

Dorothea was conscious of a feeling of pleasure. It seemed worth the adventure to be the cause of such solicitude. She sat down and they said never a word, each content to gaze in silence at the wonders about them, while language seemed paltry when they considered the escape.

After some time spent most enjoyably in this



way, Mr. Rochester asked: "What does that peak yonder remind you of, Miss Maddox?"

"Of this," she replied:

"Peopled and warm is this valley, lonely and chill the height;

But the peak that is nearer the storm cloud, is nearer the stars of light."

"That is a most beautiful thought. People who dare to climb, must encounter danger, and incur suffering, and those whose natures are the deepest, are usually less understood by the world."

"Oh, do you think so?"

She turned and looked at him as questioningly as a child.

He read her wistfulness in that glance, and as for Dorothea, she felt for the first time in her life, thoroughly comprehended.

"That peak recalls Lowell's thought to my mind," he continued. "Each hath his lonely peak, and on each heart, envy, or scorn, or hatred, tears life-long with vulture beak. Yet the high soul is left, and Faith, which is but hope grown wise. And love and patience, which at last shall overcome."

He seemed to have the right word, and helpful thought that fitted her need.

The quotation he had just given brought her courage.

"Yet the high soul is left," she mused. "It seems we must take that with us when we return to the common everyday level, 'and love and patience, which at last shall overcome.' Perhaps there is



hope, then, for one of my impetuous, wayward nature, and 'love and patience' may yet overcome my rebellious self."

Not for an instant did any double meaning attach itself to her words. She only felt encouraged that she might yet conquer some of the things within herself.

But he thought of her words again and again. "She was artless as a child, but 'love and patience shall at last overcome even spirited, unconquerable Miss Dorothy!'"

She sat in silence, still thinking of the possible attainments of womanhood, and that she desired to gain self-mastery over some things in her nature that were ever at strife.

The uplift of their talk, had given her a new purpose.

"It is worth while to 'seek, to strive, to find, but *not to yield*,'" she said at length, with high resolve shining in her eyes.

They wended their way back to the anxious party below, who gathered about them quite breathless with excitement, as Mr. Rochester brought in the prodigal.

"Any fatted calf in evidence? I thought you would surely have one, or at least a chicken," Dorothea laughingly said, between answering the excited questioners.

"We were frightened to death about you," exclaimed several, "and everybody looked glum as tombstones."

"Mr. Towner was nearly beside himself!" said



the young girl of the crowd, who followed Dorothea like her shadow.

He came up now with his face wreathed in smiles.

"Well, well, this *is* a relief! I am fearful you are not yet entirely to be trusted with the care of yourself, in spite of your strong protestations to the contrary. But allow me to congratulate you upon your remarkable escape. Rochester has just been telling me of it."

"Oh, I am like the cat which possesses nine lives; besides, I am not a victim to early piety, so there's hope for me."

Her laugh rippled out with a blithe gladness. It seemed to come from a deep fount within that just bubbled over with delight.

"I don't know why, but I never enjoyed a day so much before in my life," she thought, as she bade the stars and mountains good-night.

She arose early, for the sunrise, and her soul sang gloria patria, as she watched the exquisite flush of pink deepen into wonderful tints and colorings.

"Surely I can never be contemptuous and petty again, after being up here where God dwells!" she said, reverently. "I feel as if these snowy peaks are his castles, now He is lighting up each turret and tower. I think all of the angels are busy flashing the heavenly light out over the world."

"I feel just hushed up like a child, and 'the tenderness that is in the midst of the Almightyness,' is in this awful vastness, and it is caring for, and will help me, become a truly symmetrical character. I do not believe I shall ever be restless



again, I feel so strangely heart glad, and in place of strife within, I feel *peaceful* like I never expected to until I am old or dead."

"Up, up, into more grandeur!" she writes in her note book: "Expand my finite mind, great Master Builder! that I may take in Thy marvels."

Truly the girl's unfoldment had been rapid during her stay among these mounts of vision, and each day found her more still and content.

R. R. never sought her out apparently. Their talks seemed to come by chance, and to be impromptu, but he made every one count.

They talked of the real things of life, and without having the least conception of the truth, the girl was beginning to miss something out of her life when their strolls were omitted.

Mr. Towner found many plausible excuses for conversation with Miss Dorothy, and in conducting the party sightseeing, it was noticeable that he was very particular to explain the most minute details to her.

For a whole week, Mr. Rochester had absented himself, busy with his MS.—presumably. Some way he had no fear when he saw her returning from some glorious climb with Mr. Towner, or some other gentleman of the party.

"That castle shall be mine! I will never retreat!" he vowed, as he saw her sitting a moment alone; but he did not seek her, merely bowed in passing.

"I don't care! He might have sat down a minute. We have not had a talk for a whole week. But I don't care! It is a matter of supreme indif-



ference to *me*." She curled her lips disdainfully, as she threw some pebbles over the canyon. Down, down, they rolled. It recalled the boulder. "I suppose we never will have another talk like that; but I don't care. Such only come a few times in a lifetime, and I would not want them to be common."

"There comes Mr. Towner! Now, why does *he* have to haunt me? It is getting to be so I can hardly stir. I don't want to talk to *him*! I will have to freeze him out."

"Ah, this is a happy opportunity, Miss Maddox. May I share this solitude with you?"

"Well, frankly, I came here for isolation, Mr. Towner," said the honest girl. "I presume it is unconventional for me to tell you so, but I never was known to do things the proper way."

"Certainly; I will not intrude upon your quiet," he replied, with perfect good humor, as he bowed his adieu.

"Dear me! Why cannot one be comfortably friendly with a man? You have to like them just so hard, or lose their friendship. I thought I never would be vexed again; thought I was really becoming devout up here in this high altitude. But I am restless, and I thought that quelled forever."

Dear child. She did not realize that she was missing the quieting touch of that other soul who so comprehended her.

Several more days slipped by ere Mr. Rochester appeared conscious of her existence. Then he brought her a woodland offering of some mountain berries and ferns. He also drew from his pocket



a package of letters. "You are one of the fortunate beings this time, Miss Maddox. Eight letters!"

"Oh, thank you!" she said delightedly, as he handed them to her and delicately withdrew.

Not since his resolution to conquer, had fear crossed his mind until now.

"She looked very happy over those letters! One was from a gentleman, and it was the thickest of all. I fancied her face lit up specially when she came to that. I would like to hurl it and the sender down the gorge," he said, as a dark cloud settled over his face.



## CHAPTER LIX.

Vancouver was reached, and they left the cars for the floating palace that lay at anchor awaiting their embarkment. Dorothea was in wild spirits over her first trip of any distance upon the water. She explored every part of the boat, and amused the passengers with her outbursts of enthusiasm.

Mr. Towner found it quite as difficult to keep his eyes upon her here as among the mountain fortresses. She was on the upper deck with her field glass much of the time, allowing nothing to escape her.

She remained on deck quite a while one evening, and Rochester could deny himself no longer. He appeared at her side as naturally as if he belonged there. More and more it seemed they understood each other's silence, and it rested them just to be together. Conversation was superfluous. The oneness of feeling and the comprehension of each other was sufficient happiness for the time being.

"It was awful!" she said, at length. "I use the word advisedly—among the mountains; awful sublimity! What is it here on historic Puget Sound?"

She had never heard him sing before, and for answer, he sang in a fine baritone: "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea."

Dorothea did not look at him, but she felt his power.



After a long pause she remarked: "I did not know that you were religious, Mr. Rochester."

"I hardly suppose I am, Miss Maddox; but I confess to you, my belief in these things, and I should like to understand them better, and know the Author of all these wonders."

Danger is near the impregnable fort, Dorothea, for when two people find such a similarity of taste, and oneness of feeling, Cupid may be close with his fiery darts.

She said no word about her own aspirations, for had he not voiced them?

She had previously been looking acrossed as to a social peer. Now she felt his ascendancy, and unconsciously began looking up.

It was such a rest to have some one to bring her questions to, who knew what she meant without explanation.

"I never supposed the ocean would bring me the thought of peace," she said, half aloud, almost forgetting his presence.

"You know about the point of perfect stillness, fathoms down, while the waves are lashed into fury on the surface? That to me is typical peace, a point of repose, of safety, while the earth winds are playing havoc above. 'In perfect peace' means shoreless, fathomless content! 'I will keep you in measureless, exhaustless content,' is the promise that, sweet as a chime of bells, rings out hope and cheer, while we are being swept to and fro by the bleak hurricanes of earth."

"But I am most careless. Is not this breeze



becoming too stiff for you? Suppose we seek a more sheltered spot upon the lower deck."

When cozily seated, Dorothea remarked: "I confess I objected to the descent, even while my better judgment told me that you were right; but I discover this truism, that from whatever deck of life you look, there is something discernible of interest."

"Do you recall the sunsets behind the mountains, Mr. Rochester? How all we could get of them was a line of light gilding the top, just a hint of glory. So I suppose that often all anyone can get from us, is just a suggestion of what is possible for manhood and womanhood to attain—but do you know," she was speaking now out of the fullness of her heart, "I want to be more than a suggestion of help. I want to be of real value."

"I almost feel impelled to give you some of my inmost thoughts that I have never uttered to human ear. Many of them I jotted down in my note book."

"Please do. I shall feel honored."

"This came to me: Because I am a human soul, I stand before yon glorious height and say: I am mightier than thou, O mountain! for when thou shalt become a plain, and no more rear thy lofty head to be kissed by the sunset, *I shall live on, and on!*

"I can look out into the vista of the universe and say of yon splendid orb that animates all living things, and without whose power we could not live: '*I am mightier than thou, proud luminary,*



for when sun, and moon, and stars have set, *I* shall live on and on!

“Last year, as I stood by that wonderful thundering marvel of creation, and listened to what seemed Eternity’s chant, again, and again came the feeling of the dignity of the human soul; yet ‘I felt my identity shrink and contract in the presence of Nature’s immensities,’ and such a sense of utter nothingness rushed over me, while every part of my being seemed pervaded by Infinity.

“‘What is man, that *Thou* art mindful of him,’ came to me. Also a portion of something we learned at the school of oratory:

‘Being above all beings

Whom none can comprehend or none explore,  
Who fill’st existence with Thyself alone,  
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o’er—

Being whom we call *God!* and know no more.’”

Dorothea had listened entranced, but she said no word. He had not looked at her, but was conscious of her answering heart throbs.

“Then succeeded the realization, that grander than highest mountain peaks, reflecting marvels of gleam and glow, more wonderful than the green waves capped with white foam, rolling incessantly, more sublime than Niagara, is the curious, indefinable, incomprehensible human mechanism, inhabited by a still finer and more ethereal something called—a soul.

“Then I looked again at the rushing, foaming, maddening water, as it took that tremendous leap, and thought within the depths of my being, *I*



am mightier than thou, Niagara! For when thy wall has crumbled, and thy sublime song is forever hushed, the cadence of my soul shall be heard—if I but live nobly.”

They bade each other good-night shortly after that. Dorothea did not want any common words to detract from the high thoughts he had given her.

“What a rare soul he is!” she thought, “and yet he is not what the world would term a Christian. He is entertaining, full of life, and fun, as anyone I ever met. I would not have believed there was such a man. I mean, of course, there are better men, and all that; but he is so well developed, such an all-round character; not a goody-goody, but a strong, true man.”

Dorothea did not realize whither she was tending, even in these admissions to herself. Had she done so, she would have mentally boxed her ears and resolutely turned in the opposite direction.



## CHAPTER LX.

This was the last evening on shipboard, and the final meeting of the "Good Fellowship Club." To-morrow they were to separate, going in many diverse paths.

Mr. Rochester had not been near the Secretary for three days, and now greeted her with the same unfailing courtesy that he accorded every one else.

It piqued the proud girl, that after all their good talks, he should have no special word for her upon the very last night, too.

In pure retaliation she smiled upon Mr. Towner, who, encouraged by her unusual kindness, asked if he might have a little talk with her after the rest retired.

It is unnecessary to linger over this conversation, but when Dorothea concluded it, she felt real humiliation.

"If I had not smiled at him this very last evening, it would have been avoided. Mother always said that it was not a thing to boast of, how many proposals a girl had received; but rather, when she knew there was a strong possibility that it might occur, and felt she could not care, the true, noble thing to do, was to prevent it; and I saw it coming and yielded. Now I despise myself for being so weak!"



"Nobody ever will care for me that I care a fig for!"

She was not thinking of any one person, but expressing the discontent of her nature, she felt out of sorts with everything.

Morning came. Mr. Rochester assisted her, just as he did several other ladies who were without an attendant, and gave each his card, and a cordial hand-shake, as they parted.

He had not even asked where she was going, or anything whatever concerning her future plans.

Dorothea was angry with herself when she discovered that she had even noticed the omission.

"What does it signify to *me* where *he* goes? I am sure I am perfectly indifferent as to his whereabouts. I don't like him lately, anyway! I think if he had remained with us much longer I should had been thoroughly tired of him. I'm not sure but I detest him now; but it wasn't real nice of him not to show one spark of interest as to my destination. But what do I care!"

"Mr. Towner and the others were gentlemanly enough to inquire. *Any gentleman* would do that!"

"It is my opinion that Mr. Rochester is a tiresome old fellow after all! I am glad he is gone. Now I will have some fun, and not try to be deep any more. Some way, he called out the thinking side of me; yet he was full of fun, and how nicely he entertained the crowd the other evening when he gave that impersonation. He is certainly very clever. I wonder if there is anything he can't do?" mentally running over his accomplishments. "Yes,



there's one thing; he *cannot* make me like him, even if he is so—well, I suppose most people would say—fascinating. He evidently has not any desire for *my* approbation, but he shouldn't have it, if he had."

And closing her lips firmly, she joined such a portion of the party as were to continue to be her traveling companions through the Yosemite.

\* \* \* \*

Mr. Rochester had secured all the information he needed regarding Miss Dorothy's plans, from Mr. Towner, so he could afford to appear indifferent .

He decided to allow two or three weeks to intervene before he sought her.

By consulting his note book, he was enabled to locate her at every place she halted, and by taking a short cut, he planned to intercept her at one of the most interesting points of her travels.

After filling the interval with arduous literary tasks, he now felt free to enjoy a rest, and with the eagerness of boyhood, set forth as the knight of old, bent upon conquest.

The time had been a busy one with Dorothea. She had worked incessantly, and felt an insatiable desire for activity. She wished no time for reflection.

Her wit sparkled out more than ever, and she became somewhat careless of the arrows she sent forth, where they fell, or whom they wounded. She felt indifferent alike to friend or foe. Nothing touched her deeply. "I feel *don't care a tive* about



everything, and I'm having another of my old spells of wickedness!" exclaimed this patchwork girl, for that is what she called herself. "I did not think I would become so cranky again. It proves that I just care for a good time."

A superficial observer would have thought her last desire was being realized, for her laugh rang out so merrily.

One day her party had gone to explore a cave, and while entering the large room, they encountered a guide who was returning with several persons who had preceded them. The lights were insufficient to recognize even those nearest. Suddenly a gentleman of the other party stopped, for that laugh sounded strangely familiar. But it could not be—for *she* was not due in this place for two days. He listened intently, but she was silent. To grope blindly about a cave after a voice, was somewhat ludicrous. He waited, but heard nothing until just as the party disappeared through another aperture, he caught again the sound of the voice, which he felt would have known in any remote quarter of the globe.

He left his guide without a word, and started in the direction of the sound, but in his haste, the small candle he carried was extinguished, and he sought in vain for an entrance to the next room. He listened, but dead silence greeted him. He stumbled about a few moments in the darkness, then thought it would be wise to retrace his steps, find his guide, and give him an extra fee for another trip through.



"Pon my word! this is an experience! I haven't more than one or two matches left. However, I guess I can grope my way back to the world again." He lit his candle, but it flickered in the socket, though by its aid he discovered a small opening, and supposing it to be the one by which he entered, he crept carefully through.

He had advanced but a short distance when he was startled by a rushing sound. Striking another match revealed his danger, for he stood very near what seemed a deep, dark stream. He sprang back and groped for the entrance, but as he did so, his hand touched something soft. This seemed the most alarming part of his adventure. His match revealed a small creature. "Wild cat!" was his first thought. "And not a weapon of defense!"

He disliked to have even a tiny light, lest he give his enemy the advantage; still, he might incur greater danger by delay.

The perspiration stood in great drops upon his forehead, while he strained every nerve as he peered into the darkness. Fortunately he was within a step or two of the opening by which he had entered. After he had crept through he looked back, and by the aid of his small light, discovered two wild cats, so young as to be perfectly harmless. However, he had no desire to encounter the mother, and was not sorry to find himself back in the central room.

He began to breathe more naturally. "A strange thing to take tourists into a cave known to be



thus inhabited!" he said aloud, half startled by the strangeness of his voice.

He felt for his last match, it was gone!

Roderick Rochester laughed long and loud, hoping some of the visitors might hear him. But the only sound was the reverberation of his own voice.

He was debating the question as to which was the better, to remain stationary and await developments, or to grope his way out and encounter more dangers.

But his guide had missed him, and they now returned with torches.

"Great Scot! Are you safe, man?" he exclaimed excitedly. "You gave us a terrible fright."

While he was relating his adventures, another party entered, and this time he clearly recognized Dorothea's voice: "Well, *do* take me out of this! I have always wanted a taste of the weird and fanciful, and I have certainly seen enough to make me feel eerie."

"Methinks the fascinations of this spot are great!" Rochester said, in a clear voice that rang out above the others. It rang through Dorothea's very being. Surely she knew that voice? She paused and listened intently.

"Come on, Mademoiselle, or you will get lost from the party. There are several rooms we do not enter, and dark stories are told of a man being lost in the lake in yonder room."

Rochester waited no longer, but borrowing the guide's torch for a moment, he inspected the com-



pany, and catching a glimpse of Dorothea, he went straight to her.

"This is an unexpected meeting, Miss Maddox, but permit me to escort you out into the sunshine."

"*Forevermore!*" exclaimed the astonished maiden. "Yes, 'forevermore' it shall be," thought Mr. Rochester, with a feeling of deep gladness.

"Well, of all things! To find *you* in this spooky place! Must I conclude that you belong to the class who 'love darkness rather than light?'"

He appropriated her arm as if he had a right to. It was the first time he had ever touched her, and a thrill ran down to her finger tips.

He guided her back into the beautiful world, then most decorously dropped her arm and lapsed into his old reserve. But he was conscious that his power had deepened during those moments, and he felt exultant.

Dorothea never looked so blooming before, she seemed suddenly to open into a full blown rose.

"Tell me," she said impulsively, "how you happened to be in that uncanny place?"

They sat down in a delightful nook, while Rochester related the whole of his adventure.

Later, when he bade her good-night, he made no plans with her for the ensuing day, and she was left guessing as to whether it was a chance meeting, and to end thus, or if he would continue to journey with them.

"If he isn't the most provoking specimen of mankind that I ever encountered! He makes me *so* mad! Never expressed any surprise at finding me



in that den of thieves, and when we parted, never inquired, as any other man would have done, what I expected to do to-morrow, or told me a thing of his plans. The most non-committal person I ever heard of!"

"I am sure I hope he will go his way. I don't want him hanging around our crowd the rest of the trip. I've had just the most fun since he left us!"

Dorothea gave vent to her feelings by banging the door in rather an unladylike manner, and everything she touched seemed to have a tendency to gravitate earthward.

"I think it is just *mean* if the rest of my trip has to be spoiled by his coming back. I don't like him, so there!" she protested angrily, "and I *never* will, either!"



## CHAPTER LXI.

Morning found her in worse spirits than before. "I shall not stir out of this poky old hotel all day, lest I run into His Honor," she vowed.

She resolutely began to write, but after a time, the glimpse of Nature visible from her windows, wooed her in spite of her resolve, and she slipped away from the rest and had one of her solitary walks, which she usually found so enjoyable.

But nothing pleased or interested her to-day.

When she returned, she asked if anyone had called and inquired for her.

She bit her lips in vexation with herself for even asking. "Of course he wouldn't come!" She was very positive; in fact, morally *sure*, that no one wanted him to! "He is the most unparalleled example of coolness I ever heard of! I am sure it is *perfectly immaterial to me*, but it is *so* exasperating! It is perfectly disgusting! And he is so gallant about everything else! One flaw in the marble is enough for me. I wish Mr. Towner would come back. No, I don't! but he was always nice, although it is mean to wish him back just to have a pleasant time with, and with all my waywardness, I am not quite upon that plane yet!"

The next day, as Mr. Rochester did not appear,



Dorothy concluded he had departed as suddenly as he came.

"Well, if he isn't the freakiest of freaks! It is a good thing he has gone, for now I can be comfortable again."

Just then the servant handed her a note from this peculiar freak. She tore it open impatiently. "An apology, I should hope, for his absurd way of leaving a lady."

But it contained nothing of the kind, merely: "I will call upon you to-morrow at nine, for a day's trip to one of the springs of Truth."

"Indeed he may call—but Miss Dorothy will not be found. The *very idea* of his acting like a king! As if he can go and come at will, with never so much as 'by your leave, Mademoiselle?' The presumptuousness of that man is simply intolerable! I will show him that he cannot treat *me* in that lordly way."

Accordingly, next morning she set forth early with several friends. She kept their destination a profound secret to those remaining behind, lest she be followed.

Never was she in gayer spirits, and, if the truth must be told, felt a wicked glow of triumph as she realized his disappointment, for it was so keen as to reach her by telepathy.

"Now perchance the tables may turn. I seriously object to the balance of power being on his side."

Dorothea returned at night, tired but radiant.



Mr. Rochester had planned a delightful day, and she caught it correctly, he was disappointed.

He saw her come in, for he had waited to have a word with her, but she passed by with her face averted, although he knew perfectly well that she saw him.

After careful reflection, he decided that to leave again was the only alternative, for to be with her constantly would hasten on events faster than she was prepared for them. His first impression seemed correct, that such a citadel could only be taken by stratagem.

So he penned a courteous note, stating his regret in being denied the pleasure of her company yesterday, and that it was more of a disappointment because he was obliged to leave in the early morning.

If Dorothea had been angry with herself, it was intensified now.

"There! That is perfectly characteristic of me. How absurd to run off, when we might have had an ideal day! Then I was so rude to slight him when I came in, and now, I presume, he is going away forever!"

"What an opinion he will always cherish of me, and I will never have an opportunity to set it right! O it makes me just *rage!*"

"The only man who ever understood me," she slowly admitted. "And this is entirely my fault. I believe I am lacking in intellect. No one would be guilty of such consummate folly who had real good sense."



Humiliation, indignation, and regret, strove together, and each had a turn of being in the ascendancy, so that she tossed restlessly even in her sleep.

"If I had just a moment to explain or apologize," thought Dorothea, as she awakened next morning, "but he will think my manners those of a boor."

The weeks following were tiresome. Dorothea had never been so unhappy in her life. She was disgusted that so trivial a thing should cloud her usually sunny nature.

She was amid beautiful scenery, but it seemed to have lost its power to interest. She still led the crowd in all the fun, but when she laughed, she often felt it was a mockery.

Still, she never once admitted that she was missing anything out of her life. If she had, she would probably have committed self-annihilation on the spot. She was haunted with remorse over her abuse of her opportunity, and when she took time to think, it was to heap imprecations upon herself. She had entirely forgotten, or was oblivious of the fact, that she felt but a short time before that *he* was the one who had the boorish manners, and deserved her slights. Such a strange paradox is humanity.



## CHAPTER LXII.

Some weeks later, Dorothea with a party of friends, spent the day among one of the finest groups of mountains upon their journey.

They had witnessed bolder and more sublime peaks, but this possessed a grandeur of its own.

Dorothea longed for solitude, and had wandered a short distance from the rest. For the first time in weeks, the beauty and the might of the wonders in which she moved, touched her.

She had stopped a few feet from a precipice, little dreaming that the storms had washed away the earth, and that she stood only upon a thin strata.

The view held her oblivious of all danger, until she was startled by a shout: "*Get back! For heaven's sake! Get back!*"

She retreated a short distance, just as the thin crust of earth upon which she stood a moment previous, gave way.

A little later, a gentleman of distinguished bearing came up unobserved behind her, and without a second's warning, caught her in his arms.

She had not time to remonstrate or utter a word in protest, so startled was she by the daring and abruptness of the whole thing.



"Do not say one word, for if you do, I shall take the liberty of stopping your speech!" His dark eyes looked deepest, holiest love down into her very soul.

She was dazed by her narrow escape, and it was all unreal, some strange, sweet dream, that she found herself suddenly in love's haven of rest, otherwise she would have resented the whole proceeding.

They sat down upon a rock, in perfect silence, "while her very garments crept and thrilled with strange electric life, and both her cheeks grew red, then pale."

"He said no word, for none was needed—

Thus 'twas given her to know

He loved her to the height and depth

Of his large nature."

They sat in that eloquent silence while all unrest seemed to die out of her life.

She had ever spurned all proffered assistance, *she* needed not to lean, but there, under the strange new spell, felt that she must have died and gone to heaven.

Thus these two, so eminently fitted to walk life's path together, met upon the heights.

He had been coming through all his devious wanderings to meet this great gift the Divine Hand held for him, and through all her girlhood days, her life had been a preparation for this hour.

Many times had their faces been set in direct opposition to each other, again and again he had



sailed away over the seas, unconscious of her existence, but they were destined to meet at last upon this high altitude, a fitting place for true manhood to enthrone his queen.

Thus for one crowded hour of glorious life they partook of love's holy sacrament. There among the sublimities, they seemed upon consecrated ground, and to drink the very elixir of life.

At last Mr. Rochester, in spite of his wonderful happiness, became conscious of an approaching storm.

"We *must* go!" he said, hastily, and even as he spoke, "the storm was abroad in the mountains."

Hurrying her onward, they rejoined the rest, but in spite of their speed, the party were well sprinkled when they reached the hotel.

"May I see you this evening?" he whispered, as he bade her good-by.

"You may," her eyes answered.

All evening guests thronged the parlors, and to evade them seemed hopeless, but at length he discovered a nook on the balcony unoccupied, and led her hither.

"This is not the ideal spot I would have chosen, nor could I have taken the liberty I did to-day, had not your danger forced the truth from me."

"Never has woman's head rested upon this shoulder. I bring you the homage of an undivided heart. It is yours, even though you reject it."

"Mrs. Browning has expressed my feeling so much more fluently than I can, allow me to quote,"



and he repeated, in tones that touched the proud girl's very soul:

"Go from me, yet I feel that I shall stand  
Hence forward in thy shadow.  
Nevermore alone upon the threshold of my  
door  
Of individual life, I shall command  
The uses of my soul, nor lift my head  
Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
The widest land—  
Dooms takes to part us, leaves my heart in thine  
With pulses that beat double,  
What I do and dream includes *thee*."

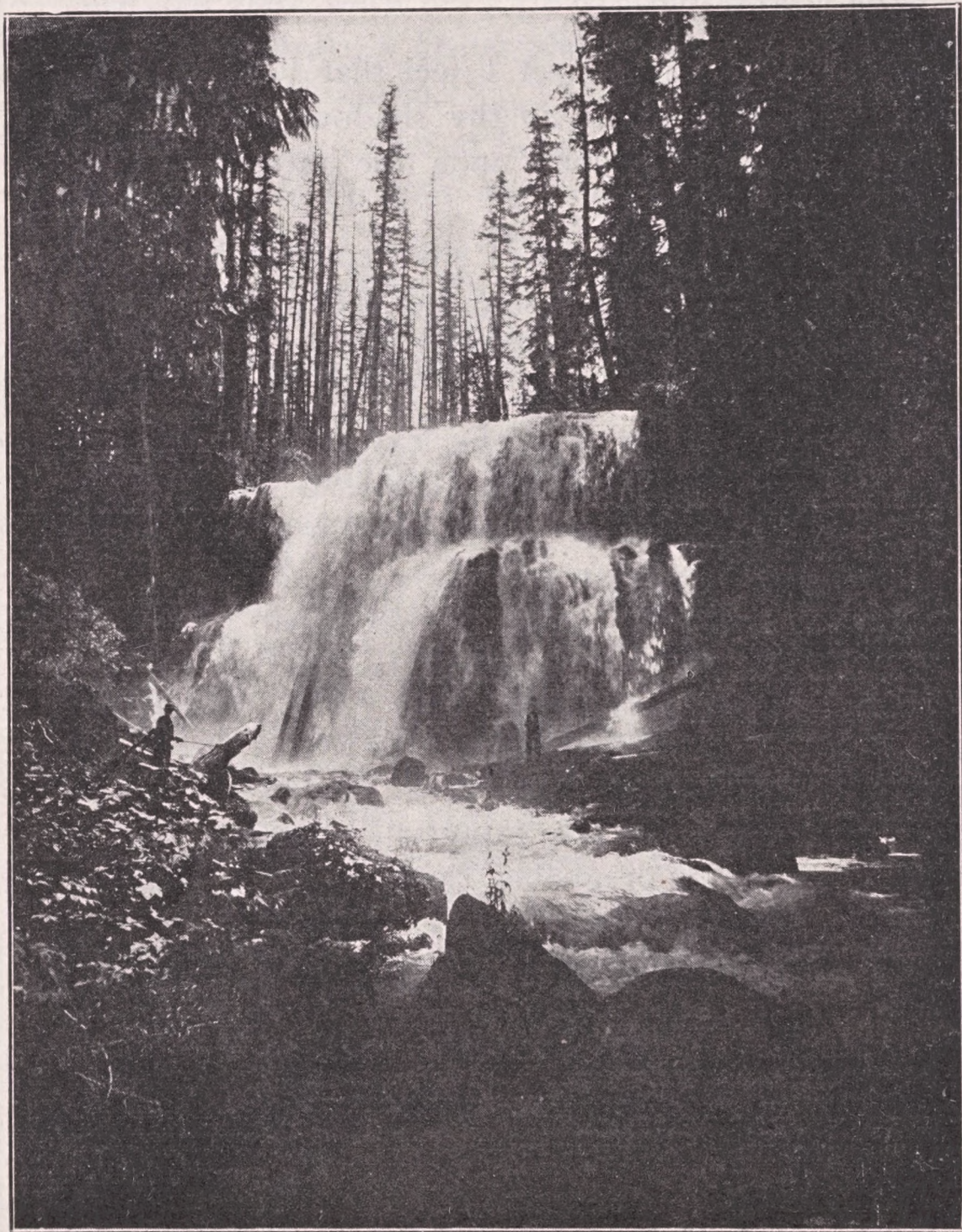
Dorothea's face was but dimly visible in the moonlight, but in her eyes was shining the serenity and pure gladness that every noble woman feels when her coronation day has dawned.

Happily, the guests deserted the parlors and balcony, and in the few rapturous moments that followed, the impregnable castle had indeed been stormed and captured by as true a knight as ever fought for fairest lady. For when they parted, and he asked: "Mine forever, my peerless Queen?" "Dorothea, forgetting all her waywardness, looked every inch a noble woman, ready to wear her crown regally, as she gave him the desired answer.

Love had already subdued her restless, tempestuous nature, and from the moment of her crowning, the transformation began.

Thus our rose of the prairies became a rose enthroned.





THE LOVERS' SHRINE



"My heart hunger doth but answer his, whose thought hath met with mine," she wrote in her note book.

And now the girl who had stood upon the doorstep of her country home and longed for high things, had indeed attained an altitude of which she dreamed not, and beside her, to inspire and lead her onward, was a noble nature that blended with her own.

"I shall return enriched beyond all thought, and it will not be a girl's heart I carry back, but a woman's."

She had never looked so superb as during these wonderful days.

They spent their last day together in a most beautiful spot, and what it was to them, can be known only to happy lovers.

As Dorothea began her homeward journey, it came to her that she had indeed outwitted the entire merry party of friends, who wished to repay old scores.

She resolved to wear no ring and keep it a profound secret.

As a parting gift, Mr. Rochester had placed about her neck a most exquisite necklace. She wore this out of sight, for she could not bear it profaned by common eyes.

Again and again her fingers sought the shrine, just to touch the magic gift.

She looked at herself in a new light. "I am all his own now, and I cannot be otherwise than noble. I have forever parted company with the wayward,



trifling girl who was so often weak. I must be white of soul, and live my high aspirations, if I am to drink of this sacramental cup."

But upon Dorothea's first visit to Eldah, after her arrival home, in spite of all her resolutions, their kinship of interest very nearly betrayed her.

"Dorothea is completely changed!" Eldah remarked to Mr. Kingsley, as they were dining.

"Her trip was a grand one, and doubtless leaves its impress," he said, with the density natural to manhood when studying the fairer sex.

"Yes, of course, but she returns a woman, and I am just sure I know what has caused the change.

"You don't mean to say that our merry girl has really been conquered?"

"No, I prefer to say that *she* has conquered some gallant knight who satisfies her heart.

"Ah, that is the way with womankind. *They* never will admit that *they* are not the conquerors."

"We are, we conquer first, and you last."

"And the last shall be first," he said, with twinkling eyes.

The next time Dorothea called, the secret told itself, but a vow of profound secrecy was pledged, only Mr. Kingsley was to be admitted. "For he promised truth upon honor to help me out when my turn came, and I shall need you both," Dorothy said.

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A Study in Life Tints—Rain, sunshine, lowering clouds, the blue of heaven peeping through,



heart-breaking sorrows, graves, and love-filled lives! *This* is the story of life.

Human chemistry is a fascinating study, the passion and the pathos of it!

The secret of being able to accept the cup of mixed decoctions called Life, is trust in the great compassionate Love, that watches above each lonely soul. And faith, that out of every flood of temptation or deluge of sorrow, there is a way of escape into peace, that is greater than all earthly satisfaction.

Thus, love transforms our sorrows, and above the grave of dead hopes and unfilled desires, bends the rainbow, with its beautiful message, that when we have mastered these intricate life studies, we shall pass on to higher attainments and deeper joys.

But there are moments when the realization of wasted opportunities and disheartening failure—in playing our part in the great song of the Universe—presses us sorely.

The following is the author's final word of hope, and has been like a starry promise through her earthly night.



UNFINISHED MUSIC.

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"I sat alone at the organ,  
At the close of a troubled day,  
When the sunset's dying embers  
On the western altar lay;  
I was weary with vain endeavor,  
My heart was ill at ease,  
And I sought to soothe my sadness,  
By the voice of those sweet-toned keys.

My hands were weak and trembling,  
My fingers all unskilled,  
To render the grand old anthem  
With which my soul was filled.  
Through the long days cares and worries,  
I had dreamed of that glorious strain  
And I longed to hear the organ  
Repeat it to me again.

It fell from my untaught fingers,  
Discordant and incomplete;  
I knew not how to express it,  
Or to make the discord sweet.  
So I toiled with patient labor,  
Till the last bright beams were gone,  
And the evening's purple shadows  
Were gathering one by one.



Then a Master stood beside me  
And touched the noisy keys,  
And lo! the discord vanished,  
And melted into peace.

I heard the great organ pealing,  
My tune that I could not play,  
The strains of that glorious anthem  
That had filled my soul all day.

Down through the dim cathedral  
The tide of music swept—  
And through the shadowy arches  
The lingering echoes crept;  
And I stood in the purple twilight  
And heard my tune again,  
Not my feeble, untaught rendering,  
But the Master's perfect strain!

So I think, perchance, *the Master*  
At the close of life's weary day,  
Will take from our trembling fingers,  
The tunes that we could not play.  
*He will hear through the jarring discords—  
The strains—although half expressed—  
He will blend it in perfect music  
And add to it all the rest."*



























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